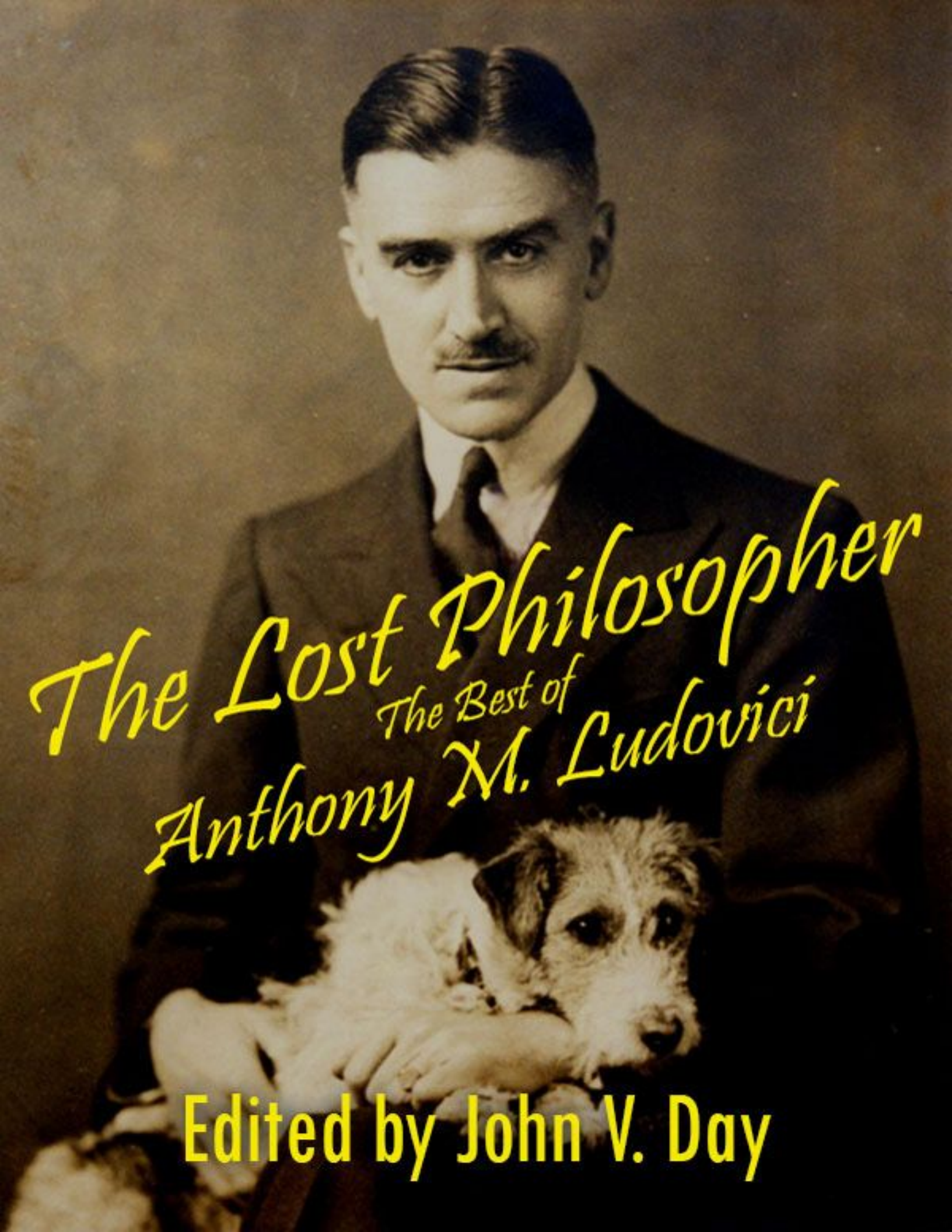
The Lost Philosopher
The Best of
Anthony M. Ludovici
Edited by John V. Day

ANTHONY M. LUDOVICI

THE LOST PHILOSOPHER

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To Wilmot Robertson

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EDITOR'S PREFACE

This anthology attempts to present a wide selection of the work published by the British writer Anthony Mario Ludovici. It will appeal both to those readers who know his work and also to open-minded readers interested in stimulating ideas who are coming upon Ludovici for the first time.

The book is divided into the following subject-headings: religion, conservatism, liberalism, men and women, eugenics, health, education, economics, and art, which shows the vast range of Ludovici's interests. Concentrating on Ludovici's non-fiction, this book contains just one of his poems and only a few passages extracted from novels; for one thing, it is hard to present out-of-context chunks ripped from a story.

Anthony Ludovici had a long life, from 1882 to 1971, but to the reading public today his name is virtually unknown. And yet in his heyday he was renowned as a lecturer, broadcaster, novelist, poet, journalist and translator, and especially as the author of thirty books of non-fiction. He was a vitally important writer because, in the words of Hamlet, 'to be honest, as this world goes, is to be one man picked out of ten thousand'.

Anthony Ludovici was that man in ten thousand. Admirers who met him for the first time felt that they had known him for years: leaving aside his courtesy, he was so frank and objective. In his writings he found kind words to say about Sigmund Freud *and* about Adolf Hitler. He reached harsh conclusions about the nature of women, but even harsher conclusions about the degeneracy of men.

When introducing one of Ludovici's books, *The Choice of a Mate*, the distinguished sexologist and writer Norman Haire declared that he stood 'poles apart' from Ludovici's aristocratic and conservative outlook, and yet he found his works absorbing: 'He interests me, he stimulates me, he sets my mind working along new paths. I admire his capacity for independent thinking, his ever-present alertness in questioning conventional beliefs, and in re-examining the evidence, or lack of evidence, underlying them. And, above all, I admire his courage in proclaiming what he believes to be the truth'.

Likewise, the Fabian socialist R. B. Kerr remarked that he, too, disagreed with Ludovici's main ideas, but he concluded that when Ludovici gave lectures 'in a small hall or drawing room, with a select audience, he has probably never been surpassed'.[1]

Various writers have commented on Ludovici's character. R. B. Kerr reported that 'he is a man of elegant appearance and neat dress, a slight and graceful figure, and a pleasing manner'. David S. Thatcher, the author of *Nietzsche in England, 1890–1914* (Toronto, 1970), found him 'a very kind, gracious host'. The writer and lecturer William Gayley Simpson described him as 'a very spare man, of erect carriage, dark earnest eyes, and very sensitive face. All the furnishings of his home showed him to be very artistic in his interests and taste. He was a brilliant conversationalist, very fertile in his imagination, quick in his thinking, almost encyclopedic in his knowledge, and ready in the expression of his views …'

In a couple of novels Ludovici also offered pen-portraits of himself. A scene in *What Woman Wishes* contrasts him with an English lord, observing that Ludovici 'was shorter than his friend, darker and not so good-looking. The more wiry, the more vivacious and perhaps the more inquisitive of the two, he lacked the other's dogged assurance, profundity and calm. He was, perhaps, the stiletto to his friend's rapier. He was obviously not English in blood, and perhaps this summed up the whole of his difference from his noble companion'. And in *French Beans* he returned to this theme of feeling an outsider, because 'educated and practically bred in this country, he had remained, nevertheless, a complete alien at heart, and often he would wonder secretly whether he would be able to probe the deep mystery, the great worldwide puzzle, embodied in the idea of England'.

Ludovici may have felt more European than English. He had a French, German, and Basque ancestry, spoke French idiomatically and had polished his German by living in Germany and translating many books. Oddly, though, only one of his own books seems to have been translated: *Lysistrata*, into Dutch. Ludovici might have found a more appreciative reception in, say, France and Germany—he regarded the French and the Germans as the most intelligent peoples in Europe—than in his native England.

But even the English-speaking world may be witnessing a revival of interest—by no means all of it friendly—in Ludovici's work. Some of his writings are being made available on the Internet at www.anthonymludovici.com. And a few recent books on British politics have deigned to evaluate Ludovici for a page or two: W. H. Greenleaf's *The British Political Tradition,* Volume 2 (London, 1983), G. C. Webber's *The Ideology of the British Right, 1918–1939* (London, 1986) and Rodney

Barker's *Political Ideas in Modern Britain* (London, 2nd edition, 1997). Greater interest has been shown by Dan Stone in his chapter on Ludovici in his book *Breeding Superman: Nietzsche, Race and Eugenics in Edwardian and Interwar Britain* (Liverpool, 2002), which, although hostile, is informative and occasionally recognizes Ludovici's true stature. For example, Stone agrees with R. B. Kerr that if Ludovici had championed more moderate views he would have become 'one of the leading writers of the age'.

Ludovici might also be more celebrated if all his books had been published. When he died in 1971, he left money for two manuscripts to be printed after his death: *The English Countryside* and, a book that must be packed with fireworks, *My Autobiography: The Confessions of an Anti-Feminist.* Unfortunately, for reasons unknown, neither book has ever made it into print.

Even without these books, the published work of Anthony Ludovici has plenty to say to our world—a world, unlike his own, marked by AIDS, dumbing down, militant feminism, and multiculturalism. Ludovici keeps his pertinence because he wrote about matters that are timeless. After long appraisals of the evidence, he gave invaluable judgements to such problems as what makes for good art, how to pray and what to pray to, the person to marry, what makes for human beauty, how to keep healthy, how to raise children, and what is the best political system. As long as there are people who appreciate high intelligence and higher courage in expounding politically incorrect truths, Ludovici will find readers. With Emily Brontë, one of his favourite writers, Anthony Ludovici might have said:

> No coward soul is mine,
> No trembler in the world's storm-troubled sphere.

Chapter 1
RELIGION

To the reading public of his time, Ludovici was renowned for hating modern art and democracy and internationalism, and for praising hierarchy and tradition and the idea of private property. His readers—mainly conservative, middle-class and Christian—lapped up these opinions. Any author of his persuasion who preferred diplomacy to absolute honesty, and who wanted to guarantee lucrative book deals, would therefore strive to avoid offending Christian believers. Luckily for admirers of Ludovici's fearless approach to the truth, he did investigate religion and the drawbacks of Christian ethics with all his usual objectivity. A keen Nietzschean, he translated several of Nietzsche's works—some of their first translations into English—and wrote three pioneering books about Nietzschean philosophy.[2] *Even at the height of his fame in the 1930s he described himself as 'a Christophobist' (in his poem, 'My Testament', which is printed below) and called Christianity's god 'the God of weaklings in dismay'. His anti-Christian stance must have cost him a good many readers.*

Apart from a collection of magazine articles published as The Specious Origins of Liberalism*, Ludovici's last book, appearing in 1961 when he was 79, was* Religion for Infidels. *In this book he examined the life-forces at work in the universe in order to develop a rational religion. He argued that only the healthy can be religious, because religiosity does not mean following a set of moral guidelines like the Ten Commandments, but experiencing a sense of awe in the face of the universe. Ludovici disliked Christianity not for its mythology, because, after all, even his beloved Egyptians had dreamed up some bizarre myths, but for a dysgenic ethos that allows unhealthy people to multiply—a subject discussed more fully in this anthology's Chapter 5. Ludovici explained why his rational religion still advocated praying to harness the universe's life forces, and how the religious-minded should pray. One important criticism of Ludovici is that in this chapter (and also in Chapters 4 and 5) he believes in Lamarckism, the inheritance of acquired characteristics. However, no mainstream biologist these days accepts the truth of Lamarckism, although one can often interpret Ludovici's arguments about behaviour patterns accumulating over the generations as being about the trend of history.*

At any rate, even some Christians have found Religion for Infidels *a penetrating book, and after reading it the anthropologist Robert Gayre called Ludovici 'one of the most diagnostic thinkers of our time'. On the other hand, Revilo P. Oliver's* Christianity and the Survival of the West *(Cape Canaveral, 1978) suggests that Ludovici's rational religion would only ever appeal to a small minority and will fail to make an impact on the less-than-rational masses. He may be right.*

Religious Decay

'[I]n order to be an active infidel and atheist one must be profoundly religious. It shows that at least one's mind is preoccupied by transcendental questions. It shows that one is less irreligious than three-quarters of the modern world, who are too shallow or too stupid to ponder the metaphysical side of life and who are too indifferent about it. Such people are never active atheists or infidels'. (*Mansel Fellowes*, p. 258)

There is probably in most men a sense of quality, a power of divination in regard to value, which, on occasions when they are confronted by a stranger whose worth they do not know, informs them immediately of the comparative rarity or commonness of his type … When this peculiar apprehensiveness in regard to worth becomes aware of any marked superiority in a fellow creature—an experience which in unhappy lives very seldom occurs—a feeling of certainty usually accompanies it, which is as mysterious as the evidence upon which it is based is intangible and elusive. A man knows that he has met his superior, he knows too how far the superiority he recognizes extends, and he is conscious of experiencing something exceptional, something exquisitely precious.

That such encounters are becoming every day more rare probably explains the increasing growth … of that kind of disbelief and heresy which, far from being wanton, arises from a total inability to envisage greatness, whether in kings, ideals or gods. For we arrive at our most exalted images not by solitary flights of the imagination unassisted, but by actual progressive steps in the world of concrete things, so that the springboard from which we take our final leap into the highest concepts of what a god might be is always the highest man we happen to have met. Hence, in an age when greatness among men is too rare to be felt as a universal fact, a disbelief in all gods is bound sooner or later to supervene. (*Too Old for Dolls*, pp. 41–2)

Is it or is it not a fact that all classes, rich and poor alike, are now suffering from deep spiritual depression? If it is a fact, it is obviously ridiculous and unfair to attempt even along economic lines—that is, by material reforms alone—to alleviate the pain only of one class, and the concentration of attention upon proletarian unhappiness constitutes an absurd and utterly unjustifiable obsession. If, on the other hand, it is not a fact that all classes are suffering equally from deep spiritual depression, a somewhat formidable array of unpleasant facts are left utterly unexplained and uncoordinated. These are: the steady spread of apathy, cynicism, listlessness and recklessness—always signs of great unhappiness—among the wealthy classes; the frenzied search for new creeds, new movements, new interests, however childish—always a sign of despair; and the unceasing pursuit of pleasure among the non-religious sections of the wealthy classes—a sign of intense boredom, weariness and gloom. (*The False Assumptions of 'Democracy'*, pp. 166–7)

As Christian morality is the only ruling code of the Western world, and this moral code is inextricably entangled with the dogmata and myths of the religion, it follows that, as more and more Westerners cease to believe in these Christian dogmata and myths, so they insensibly cease to recognize the authority of Christian morals. For, although they may still hold that Christian morals are the only morals, they will no longer regard them as binding. The result is that with every further decline in the number of believers there occurs, wherever Christianity once held sway, a corresponding decline in morality (especially among infidels otherwise ignorant), with its inevitable sequels: asocial, anarchical and criminal behaviour. This process is now taking place under our eyes. It constitutes one of the gravest dangers for the Western world, and if Christianity continues to bar the way to the introduction of another religion, more acceptable to the modern mind, it will inevitably lead to complete social chaos. (*Religion for Infidels*, pp. 13–14)

By confining religious observance to conformity to a pattern of social behaviour, we leave out altogether its transcendental aspects, with all the emotions, passions and loyalties that accompany every personal relationship, even to an ordinary fellow-being. In the case of a divinity we omit, in addition, the piety and devotion which we express in acts of homage and worship …

People who are satisfied that they are leading moral lives will affirm, with all the assurance peculiar to the utterance of a truism, that they are fulfilling all the demands of their religion and that attendance at a place of worship would amount almost to overdoing it. The necessary consequence of this attitude is that in countless cases the faithful, in order to be induced to attend a place of worship at all, will eventually expect some kind of extra lure in return, as it were, for their ‘trouble’.

Hence there arises among those who regard religion merely as morality a tendency to enliven, if not to vulgarize, the act of religious observance so as to make it attractive, with the result that its sacrificial character, and the means it affords of expressing the believer’s homage and reverence to the supreme power whom he acknowledges as his god, is minimized, if not wholly ignored. This result is clearly manifested in Protestant countries by the prevalence of the view that a church or chapel service should be above all a source of diversion, in fact a good ‘draw’, if a large congregation is to be expected …

Thus, the whittling-down of man’s relationship and approach to the power behind phenomena to an occasional spiritual exercise, which has as its *conditio sine qua non* the certainty that it will be diverting, is so alien to the most modest estimate of what this relationship should be, and of how it should be felt by the humbler party to it, that it seems reasonable to deny those who are capable of it … the emotions, the intellectual grasp and the appreciation of a truly religious attitude. Nor, when we reflect on the close association of this trivial view of religion with the belief that religion is only mortality, does it seem unfair to regard the one as probably conditioned by, or else as conditioning, the other. An alternative interpretation of their constant coexistence would be to imagine their common root in a failure to form an adequate conception of the infinite resource and overwhelming might of the power or powers behind phenomena. I speak of an ‘adequate conception’ in this respect, but the words are really misleading, for there is no need of any such mental feat, since the compelling evidence of the infinite resource and overwhelming might in question forces itself on the attention of every observant man and woman almost every minute of the day. It is not so much imagination that is lacking in those who reveal this twofold misunderstanding of religion and religious observance as plain everyday observation—vision.

Eyes have they and they see not. At bottom what ails them is intellectual indolence, a tendency to take things for granted in order to escape the necessity of thought. (*Religion for Infidels,* pp. 31–4)

A long acquaintance with such people who, nowadays in England at least, are preponderatingly lower middle class, compels the conclusion that with them, as with the sophist Socrates, morality is an obsession. It provides them with an ideal cathartic for relieving their unconscious, pent-up hatred and envy of their fellow-men; a weapon with which to torment them without incurring the risk of retaliation. For even at the hands of an onlooking crowd, a moral persecutor of his neighbour runs little risk of either censure or abuse. Thus puritans can bask securely in the glow of social approbation whilst thus freely venting man's common but secret hatred of mankind. (*Religion for Infidels,* p. 55)

'Heresy', Father Jevington was saying, 'is an illness of the immature. Immature ages, like immature people, are as likely to get it as children to contract whooping cough. The age of Darwin and Huxley, for instance, the sixties and seventies—what age could have been more immature! We are only now realizing now how immature it was. Darwin and Huxley were heretical. Take the beginning of heresy in England! What could have been more immature than the age of the early Tudors? The Wars of the Roses had killed everything mature in the country. Everything was upstart, everything was new'.

In front, the conversation was incredibly dissimilar. The Colonel and the Major were walking solemnly side by side, apparently engaged in the discussion of a most abstruse problem, and whichever happened to be listening lowered his eyes to the ground as if in deep and difficult thought.

'I confess', the Major was saying, with the daring glint of an iconoclast in his eyes, 'that I am often puzzled about one thing in regard to the question of an all-wise Providence'. He inclined his head to one side as he spoke, as if by looking at the landscape at an acute angle his intellect would work with greater penetration. 'I cannot account for the use of hail and hailstones. It seems to me that the reason for everything else is perfectly plain, but the purpose of hailstones has so far eluded me'.

'No, hailstones certainly make a poor show', observed the Colonel, who did not revel quite so much as his junior officer did in profound metaphysical speculation.

‘I don’t venture to say, mind you’, the Major continued, ‘that they have not got their use. I feel certain that they must have. But I can only say that hitherto I have failed to discover it’.

‘Don’t they help to break up the ploughed land and all that palaver?’, suggested the Colonel.

‘No! You see, they occur more often in seasons when the ground is not ploughed up at all. That is just my difficulty’.

‘Yes, they certainly make a very poor show’, repeated the Colonel, feeling a little beyond his depth.

‘And you see’, pursued the Major quite gravely, ‘it isn’t as if they come with more or less regularity like rain, wind or snow. Why, in three years, sometimes, you won’t see a single heavy hailstorm’.

‘Yes, I’ve noticed it myself; they’re an unreliable *bandobust*’.[3]

‘I can’t help thinking’, observed the Major, inclining his head ever more to one side, and nodding slowly, as if to ease out his great thought with becoming gentleness, ‘that their very irregularity may be a clue to their particular use by Providence’.

‘Yes, that sounds all square’, the Colonel remarked.

‘Suppose, for instance’, pursued the Major, ‘that they serve a definite purpose, as they must do, then surely the irregularity of their occurrence must be part of that purpose’.

‘Quite so, like the irregularity of war or any other pest’, said the Colonel. ‘I know one thing, though—a pukka hailstorm plays ducks and drakes with the glass of your hot-houses’.

‘There you are!’, exclaimed the Major apodictically. ‘And probably that very act of destruction, unmerited as it may seem, is the genuine purpose of a hailstorm’.

‘’Pon my soul, I hadn’t thought of that’, said the Colonel, with a note of surprise in his voice that implied he expected more from his efficient mind.

‘In fact’, added the Major with some excitement, ‘I don’t know that we haven’t lighted upon the only solution there is to the problem. You say hailstones break the glass of hot-houses, but why shouldn’t this alone be their adequate purpose?’

The Colonel’s bushy eyebrows were raised in undisguised astonishment. ‘But how?’, he demanded almost shrilly.

‘Of course, to prove it, we should have to know the periods when unemployment is most acute, and discover whether they coincided with the occurrence of heavy hailstorms’, the Major said thoughtfully.

But still the Colonel was mystified.

‘Why don’t you see, Sir Robert’, the Major cried with unusual animation, ‘they make work for the poor!’

‘’Pon my soul’, the Colonel ejaculated humbly, ‘that would never have occurred to me’. (*Mansel Fellowes*, pp. 81–3)

Queeze was not a churchman. He and his wife liked to imply that their great minds had discovered a form of Christianity—they called it ‘true Christianity’—superior to that found sufficient by millions of Europeans for centuries. Its chief features were that it was comfortable (requiring no tiresome exercises, not even that of walking to a place of worship), that it was comforting (accounting for all apparent injustices as manifestations of divine wisdom, with which it would be impious to interfere by means of charity, succour, practical sympathy), and that it admitted of luxury in the midst of howling distress (since it assumed that all well-being was a divine provision for deserving people). (*Poet’s Trumpeter,* p. 97)

Christianity

Universal liberty, without a purpose or a direction; the free and plebeian production of thoughts and theories divorced from all aim or ideal, after the style in which children are born in the slums; devotion to a truth that can be common to all; the depression of the value and dignity of man; and a certain lack of reverence for all things—these four aspirations of Christianity and Protestantism have been the aspirations of science, and at the present moment they are practically attained …

The empiricists Francis Bacon, Hobbes and Locke were among the first, by their teaching, to level a blow at genuine thought, at the man who knows and who is the measure of all things, and this they did by arriving at a conception of knowledge and thought that converted the latter into possessions which might be common to everybody—that is to say, by reducing all knowledge to that which can be made immediately the experience of all. This was the greatest blasphemy against the human spirit that has ever been committed. By means of it, everyone, whatever he might be, could aspire to intellectuality and wisdom, for experience belongs to

everybody, whereas a great spirit is the possession only of the fewest. (*Nietzsche and Art*, pp. 54–5)

From the very beginning it would be well for all young people to recognize that on this question of unselfishness and selfishness, and the praise and blame commonly accorded to each, Christian teaching is psychologically false. Owing to its early appeal to the pariah and the outcast, this religion constantly reveals a psychology framed more on demagogic appeal than actual fact. The very command, ‘Love one another’, like the Mosaic command, ‘Honour thy father and thy mother’, is based on a misunderstanding of normal mental processes.

Love and honour are not voluntary; they are a natural, inevitable and quite involuntary reaction to the lovableness and honourableness of the object, whether neighbour or parent.

No command can make one love anyone who is not lovable. ‘Seek neighbours that are lovable so that you may inevitably love them’ would have been more sensible. ‘Love one another’ is shallow and reveals a poor, almost benighted grasp of human psychology.

You might just as well say, ‘Admire one another’ or ‘Esteem one another’. These reactions depend on certain qualities in the other, and cannot be autogenerated in response to a command even from a god.

The same remarks apply to the Mosaic ‘Honour they father and thy mother’. The proper command would have been: ‘Parents, make yourselves honourable in the sight of your children’ …

Evidently, psychological insight is not a strong point with the Holy Family …

I take it that all intellectually honest persons know that, in everything they do, they act either under compulsion, from inclination or from self-interest. There is no such thing as a consistent course of so-called ‘unselfish’ conduct that is not pursued for some kind of self-gratification. Charity is the most transparent of these.[4]

Everybody, therefore, is consistently ‘selfish’. The wise, however, are ‘enlightened egoists’—i.e., they are ‘selfish’ only up to the point when self ceases to be best served by ‘selfishness’, as, for instance, in their relationship to immediate dependents who can minister to their happiness; in their relationship to menials, retainers and friends, all of whom may make life happy; or the reverse, for a central figure. And the unwise are

‘unenlightened egoists’—i.e., they carry ‘selfishness’ to a point which turns their environment against them, so that in the end ‘self’ gets badly served and is made unhappy as the result of ‘selfishness’ …

Or consistent ‘unselfish’ behaviour may be the outcome of abnormal congenital impulses—masochism, for instance. But even in this case it is self-gratification. Or it may be a person’s only ladder to power or conspicuousness in a small circle, or his means of reducing his environment to submission by giving it a guilty conscience (this is very common).

Truth to tell, however, it is life’s chief charm and beauty that the acts which constitute the greatest benefit to all—the work of the good artist, the good legislator, the good actor, the good inventor—are unquestionably ‘selfish’. They please the performer before the beneficiary.

Beside them, the acts of the officious spinster who bustles interferingly about her parish, killing time by trying to stamp her importance on the minds of her neighbours, are wholly fatuous, yet *these* are called ‘unselfish’. (*The Choice of a Mate*, pp. 36–8)

Among the most disastrous results of Christianity’s disregard of biological attributes in the estimation of human worth has been Western mankind’s adoption of the exact converse of the farmer’s point of view and practice. Instead of uprooting and discouraging the weeds and noxious growths in order to spare, protect and avoid the sacrifice of the nobler, more valuable plants, we allow the weeds to flourish and multiply, always at the cost of the more desirable and more promising denizens of the human garden. We have conditioned our natures to react compassionately to what is misshapen, inferior and defective. Never do we dream of extending ‘pity’ to those fast-diminishing stocks in the population, which, owing to their biological superiority, constitute the only guarantee we have of our race being able to survive in a desirable form. The very idea of championing these all-too-rare superior stocks—as the husbandman champions his more valuable plants, because of the dangers and burdens threatening them from the quarter of weeds and fungi—would evoke no more than a puzzled stare, even if it did not actually provoke a laugh. Yet if we ask why, by what sophisticated reasoning on justice, it should have become an accepted convention to confine solicitude to the ill-favoured, the unsound and the superfluous, even when biologically superior stock are diminishing in our society, there is but one answer, which is that Christianity enjoins this

practice. John Cowper Powys candidly admits this, yet such is his unconscious acceptance of the morals of Christianity that, he says, the ‘only real progress our Western humanity has made’ has been in the direction of ‘pity and sympathy’. Never does he appear to see any anomaly in the fact that this ‘pity and sympathy’ should be concentrated on the sickly, misshapen and the defective.

The same remarks apply to the principle of sacrifice. Why should it be regarded as right and *de rigueur* always to sacrifice the greater and more precious to the less, rather than the other way round? Can it be that Christianity’s most sacred symbol, the god nailed to the cross for the sake of the mob, has, as a spectacle contemplated for twenty centuries, at last made Western humanity accept as incontrovertible and self-evident the principle it thus gruesomely illustrates? (*Religion for Infidels,* pp. 69–70)

He had discovered that the almost universal feature of nervous abnormalities in England which were not the outcome of trauma or congenital disease arose out of the national characteristic of ‘consuming one’s own smoke’. He had been the first to demonstrate with scientific precision that the suppression of Catholicism in England, with its concomitant proscription of the confessional box from the churches, had laid the foundation of three-quarters of the nation’s nervous disabilities. He had thus called attention to yet one more objectionable and stupid feature of the Protestant Church …

He would point out that it was this absence of the rite of confession that made people in Protestant countries so conspicuously more self-conscious than the inhabitants of Catholic countries. For nothing leads to self-consciousness more certainly than the attempt constantly to consume own’s own smoke. (*Too Old for Dolls,* pp. 160–1)

[S]ay what you will, the sun is pagan. It says ‘yea’ to life. In its glorious rays it is ridiculously easy to forget the alleged beauties of another world. Under its scorching heat the snaky sinuousness of a basking cat seems more seductive than the image of a winged angel, and amid the gold it lavishes nothing looks more loathsome, more repulsive, than the pale cheek of pious ill-health. In short, it urges man and woman to a wanton enjoyment of life and their fellows; it recalls to them their relationship to the beasts of the field and the birds in the trees; it fills them with a careless thirst and hunger for the chief pastimes of these animals—feeding, drinking and procreation;

and the more ‘exalted’ practices of self-abnegation, self-sacrifice and the mortification of the flesh are easily forgotten in such a mood. (*Too Old for Dolls,* p. 126)

When examining the answers Christianity gives to the questions man incessantly asks about himself, life and the universe, it is essential to remember that these answers were made for a remote generation of men whose knowledge, credulity, capacity for criticism and tendency to superstition bear little resemblance to those of modern civilized people. Satisfying and meaningful as the myths and doctrines of Christianity may have proved to the populace in the early centuries of our era, it would be unrealistic to expect them to be accepted now with the same meek, unquestioning faith.

A generation that no longer believes in devils, demons and the demoniacal etiology of disease; that has difficulty in imagining the transfer of devils from two men into a herd of swine, and even more difficulty in believing that these very devils pleaded to be so transferred; a generation that doubts the possibility of parthenogenesis in human beings, and has long ago dropped the practice of ‘whipping-boys’, cannot see any sense in vicarious punishment, and is therefore unable to take on trust the story of an omnipotent deity who could feel appeased and propitiated for the sins committed by beings he has himself created, by the death in agony of his own beloved and only-begotten son—to such a generation, hardly one aspect of the Christian mythology and the supernatural events it includes appears to have even tolerable plausibility, let alone cogency. (*Religion for Infidels,* p. 36)

There is truth in David’s remark (Psalms 53.1), ‘The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God’, for … it is a common infirmity of weak intellects to be unaware of any mystery or marvel in existence, and as awe, wonder, curiosity and perplexity in the presence of what is obscure in life and the universe constitute the source of religious feeling, it is probable, as I have already indicated, that a substantial amount of present-day unbelief may be due to the declining intelligence of Western populations.

The mistake usually made by the superficial and popular Christian apologist, and invariably by the ordinary Christian, is to assume that David’s stricture applies as perfectly to the negators of godliness in general as to those who, like Bernard Shaw, are atheists only vis-à-vis of the

Christian god as described by Holy Writ and understood by the various churches. Yet there is all the difference in the world between the two positions. It would, for instance, be most hazardous in the present state of our knowledge to deny the possibility of a personal deity of any sort whatsoever as the supernatural incumbent of the throne whence unseen power rules over world phenomena, for we have no means of deciding the question one way or another.

But about the god of the Christians we have the fullest information. We know his character, temper, behaviour in various circumstances, his demands upon his worshippers, his attitude to a large number of problems and situations, his taste in regard to human type, his son and even his locum tenens, the Holy Ghost. Indeed, to judge from the average BBC parson who gives his listeners their religious uplift every morning at 6.55 and 7.55 am, there is precious little that is not known about the Christian god, his thoughts, his likes and dislikes and his reasoning methods, and I am often filled with wonder at the extraordinary familiarity these ecclesiastical broadcasters seem to enjoy with the peculiarities and vagaries of the divine mind.

Confronted with this extensive and detailed knowledge of the Christian god and, above all, with the nature of his alleged Creation and his supposed relationship to it as a god of love, we are not in the presence of a hypothetical deity at all, about whose existence and character we should be unable to affirm anything whatsoever, but in the presence of a well- if not fully-defined objective figure. Indeed, we possess about his character much more information than the most erudite historian could give us about Harold II of England. We are therefore in a position to affirm an unconscionable amount about him, and it is on the score of what we are thus able to affirm that we say emphatically that we do not believe in him. In this sense only are we frankly atheists. (*Religion for Infidels*, pp. 132–4)

> Post no priest beside my litter;
> Carve no cross upon my bier!
> As a Christophobist bitter
> Let me pass unchurched from here!
> Sing no hymns when I am buried;
> Put no pennies in my palm!
> I shan’t clamour to be ferried
> To the land of peace and balm.

Thither should I drift, however,
And behold with some surprise
Things I thought existed never,
I shall not cast down my eyes.
Theirs the blame whose Word deceived me,
Baffling reason, thought and sense,
And whose diffidence bereaved me
Of the crucial evidence.
Even if I be instructed
To appear before the throne,
Whence a godhead has conducted
World affairs since time unknown;
If moreover he engages
His recording angel there,
To recite a few score pages
Of my sins, let him beware!
I will range his whole creation,
From the tapeworm to the fly,
And await his explanation
As to why, and why, and why?
So invoke no Heaven's daughter
When I'm laid beneath the sward,
And don't waste your holy water
On my oak-stained coffin-board!
('My Testament', *New English Weekly*, 19 July 1934,
p. 323; reprinted in *Religion for Infidels*, pp. 134–5)

Rational Religion

Because of the difficulty most thoughtful men now have in accepting orthodox religion, and the deprivation they inevitably suffer in living without any religion whatsoever, the time seems to have come when some attempt should be made, however tentatively, to provide at least a rough outline of a possible religion for so-called 'infidels'—the men and women who cannot believe in Christianity and who nevertheless are far from willing to remain destitute of any concern about transcendental questions. (*Religion for Infidels*, p. 9)

If we knew all there is to know about life and the universe, including their origin, and were as well-informed about our own provenance and

purpose as we are about those of the cars we drive, it is probable that what we understand by religion would either have much less importance than it has at present, or else would wear so different a mien as hardly to be recognized as religion by the modern churchman.

For the principal source of all religious belief, and of the particular claims of different religions, is the hidden, inexplicable character of both our world and our existence in it. This presents such a formidable barrier to a satisfying grasp of all that we see and feel about us that the effort to rid ourselves once and for all of the agonizing uncertainty of our knowledge about ourselves, our destiny and our surroundings drives us, or at least the more thoughtful among us, to clutch, often with undue haste, at any answer to our endless questionings provided that it is tolerably plausible. And it is this plausible and usually provisional answer that gives us the basis of our religion and determines its character.

Whence do we and the universe come? Whither are we going? Why are we here? How did life originate? What means the immeasurable vastness in which we are but a negligible speck? Why this infinite multitude of heavenly bodies? What is the purpose of it all? Is the very idea of purpose an illusion? Is everything meaningless, pointless and the sport of chance and accident?

Every fresh generation of men asks these questions, and no progress is made in answering them. Even modern science, despite its many staggering and spectacular advances, cannot help us here. Indeed, when the reading-public learn of the latest findings of the astronomers, physicists, geophysicists and philosophers, their wonderment and mystification are magnified rather than diminished. Compared with the relatively simple account of the origin of life and the universe with which our forebears of a hundred years and more ago were content, present-day scientific theories about our origin and our psychophysical nature are so complex, unbelievably fantastic and, above all, so lacking in unanimity that those moderns who are too intelligent to take anything for granted, who still retain the power to wonder and wish to be enlightened concerning the universe and themselves, may be forgiven if in the end the replies they get to their anxious inquiries leave them more baffled than illuminated. (*Religion for Infidels,* pp. 17–18)

Agnosticism … may be a comfortless refuge from the countless riddles that incessantly taunt human curiosity, but, if he can control himself when tempting alternatives occur to him, it is the only course open to the man who, abreast of the latest speculations of science, is scrupulously honest in intellectual matters …

Whether the decline in Christian worshippers is to be ascribed to the slow saturation of the Western atmosphere with the views of science or to the general and steady loss of intelligence throughout the population, a loss which inevitably blinds increasing numbers of commonplace folk to the challenging problems of the world about them, cannot be determined …

Macneile Dixon … thinks ‘the decay of religious faith is due to the increase of our positive knowledge’ … whilst Dr Joad, apparently of the same opinion, maintains that ‘it is a comparatively rare thing to find an educated man who is also a Christian’ … But, as we have seen, there are other contributory factors, and I submit that, in addition to the increase in stupidity, there has been in recent years, especially in the Western world, a marked increase in superficiality and levity. This may represent only one facet of the increase of stupidity, although it may more probably derive from the substantial decline in passion and temperamental vigour, which in itself is the outcome of the general decline in stamina throughout the populations of the West. (*Religion for Infidels,* pp. 24–6)

In reply to the question, ‘What passion can explain an effect of such mighty consequence as religion?’, [David Hume] replies, ‘Not speculative curiosity merely, or the pure love of truth, but’—and what follows may be briefly summarized as ‘fear’ … This is also Bertrand Russell’s opinion. ‘Fear’, he says, ‘is the basis of the whole thing, fear of the mysterious, fear of defeat, fear of death’ … whilst even William James seems to lend it some countenance when he says: ‘The ancient saying that the first maker of the gods was fear receives voluminous corroboration from every age of religious history’ … If man were encompassed only by dangers which drove him to implore the protection of benign supernatural forces against their opposite, fear would adequately explain the matter. But man, and above all unscientific and ignorant man, is also surrounded by wonders not necessarily always of a menacing kind. Everywhere, his senses apprehend something that he can neither do, control nor understand, and we have but to observe the overpowering curiosity of the lower animals, which makes even the least intelligent of them, let alone the cat and the dog, incur danger

in order to examine and search the origin of an unfamiliar object or sound, to become convinced that man is hardly likely to be less irresistibly impelled by his curiosity. As Professor J.B. Pratt remarks, curiosity ‘exists alike in the scientist and in the savage, in the monkey and in the dog’ …

If, then, we conclude that religion is probably a blend of both curiosity and fear, it seems justifiable to assume that as man’s mastery over Nature gradually increased until it established him in the relatively secure position he has enjoyed for several centuries, at least in the civilized world, the factor curiosity is probably that which has recently played the predominant part in fostering the religious attitude of mind.

Thus, at bottom, religion satisfies two major human needs: it answers man’s questions about origins, and furnishes him with guesses about the ‘power behind phenomena’ and his relationship to that power. These are religion’s fundamental meaning and function, and its most essential features are probably its tenets concerning the power in question and man’s relationship to it. For, given the fact of such a power, nothing could be more vitally important than to know what to expect of it, what it expects of man and how to obtain contact with it. (*Religion for Infidels*, pp. 27–8)

Here, on this planet Earth, we are very much like a group of aviators flying above the clouds. Their safety depends essentially on accurate estimates of the direction, strength and possible variations of the invisible wind, of the temperature and chemical composition of the invisible atmosphere, and of their altitude and position in an area destitute of visible signposts. In the same way, we on this planet, alone in the vast universe, will be more likely to avoid disaster or destruction, at least in our individual lives, if we try to understand something about the invisible forces about us, and, above all, how they work, than if we omit to find out anything about them …

A merely urban knowledge of life, even when it includes an intimate acquaintance with humanity, may hardly suffice for an adequate picture of what animate Nature implies and what primary forces invisibly control her machinery. Given a high degree of sensitiveness and intelligence, it is conceivable that even a confirmed townsman might, without the panorama of vital phenomena as it is unrolled in all its rich manifoldness along the countryside, reach fairly shrewd notions about the basic trends of the invisible forces directing living things on Earth. Indeed, Lao Tzu, of the

sixth century BC, actually maintained that merely by silent meditation one might become master of all worldly wisdom.

But, generally speaking, in order to reach fruitful conclusions concerning these questions it is desirable to have lived for years where, alone in civilized communities today, one may view life with approximate accuracy, because it is still, as it were, naked, opulent and varied enough, both in the animal and vegetable realms, to reveal its secrets.

Then, unless one resembles too closely the tired, listless and Nature-surfeited peasant, certain precious discoveries cannot escape one, and among the more striking of these is the fact that behind the visible phenomena of the daily scene unmistakable prevailing trends become noticeable. They appear like pervasive rules of procedure, governing life's processes in both animals and plants, and are as unexpectedly different from our superficial first assumptions as they possibly could be. Ultimately they seem to merge into one universal trend or bias, which appears to us as a cosmic influence informing all living things, and it can be so precisely recognized that its attributes and their manner of operation may be clearly defined.

Let us therefore explore the vast panorama of Nature as displayed in our small world alone, without troubling ourselves with its manifestations elsewhere, and see what evidence we can find of any distinctive attributes whatsoever which may help us to understand the invisible forces governing life's processes.

As a result of a close and steady observation of them, above all as they reveal themselves in the behaviour of living things, we feel entitled to draw the following conclusions:

(a) They give fair field and no favour to all alike, no matter of what kind. This is shown not only by the indiscriminate attacks of pathogenic organisms on both men and animals, not only by the enormous amount of distress, irritation, pain and even lethal disease which may afflict both men and animals through the action of microorganisms and insects of all kinds, and not only by the *bellum omnium contra omnes*[5] that never ceases among plants and animals, but also by the multitude and wide dissemination of parasitic organisms. L.A. Borradaile tells us, for instance, that 'from the amoeba to man there is probably no animal which is not attacked by some parasite and, and as many species of parasite are confined to one host, it is

probable that parasitic animals are not greatly inferior in numbers to all the others together, though their habits prevent the fact from being generally realized' …

(b) They are quite indifferent regarding what we human beings of a late civilization call 'quality'. In other words, they show no 'taste' or fine discrimination in our sense. This is shown by the vast amount of what we cannot help considering as 'ugly' or 'repulsive' features in Nature. Indeed, the whole gamut of her achievements, from the transcendent beauty of some of the cats down to the least attractive of her batrachians and gastropods, some venomous snakes, some fishes, and 'certain hideous bats' (*The Origin of Species*, chapter 15), seems to indicate that no distinguishable inclination to beauty rather than to ugliness characterizes the life-processes, and that what appears to take place is a random production of either, according to the exigencies of the evolutionary hazards.

(c) They give no sign of favouring any upward trend in the evolution of living things, whether plants or animals. 'Natural selection' occurs destitute of all civilized humanity's estimates of desirability. Indeed, the evolutionary steps securing survival are so often steps downward or backward that the examples of 'retrograde metamorphosis' in Nature, as Spencer pointed out some ninety years ago, 'outnumber all others' …

(d) A more dynamic and upsetting principle than the so-called 'struggle for existence' (urged on by the self-preservative instinct) or, as Schopenhauer termed it, 'the will to live' animates all living creatures and plant life, and the forces governing life's processes have implanted in all their creatures a will much more extensive, which takes the 'will to live' in its stride.

For we see animals and plants doing not merely the bare necessary to keep alive, but also everything possible with the view of overcoming other species. They do not merely sustain their own lives; they obtrude themselves on other lives, even other lives belonging to their own species. They all assault, invade and trespass on alien territory. We need only watch them for a little while in order to be convinced of the error of assuming existence as the be-all and end-all of their striving. For what soon strikes us —chiefly in contemplating animals, even quite young ones—is that they feel above all, and *coûte que coûte*,[6] the need to discharge their strength, to make something else pay for their good fettle and high spirits. Their first

concern, as soon as they stir, is to importune their surroundings, to enjoy using and expressing energy, if possible at the cost of some other life—that is to say, in overpowering, subduing or merely intimidating and scaring other creatures.

The unleashed dog rouses the neighbourhood with his bark, seizes a fallen branch and shakes it, growling angrily the while. He charges other dogs on his path, fights them and chases every creature within sight. He will even chase and try to bully the fast-revolving wheels of a passing car. He revels in his strength and fleetness …

Indeed, we have the highest authority for declining to set man outside Nature. Even if it may be extravagant to claim that Nature has become wholly conscious in him, his affinity to her as her child makes him as reliable an exponent of her deepest currents and trends as any animal or plant. Here most thinkers are in agreement with Professor A.N. Whitehead, who stated the case with commendable clarity when he said: ‘It is a false dichotomy to think of Nature *and* man. Mankind is that factor in Nature which exhibits in its most intense form the plasticity of Nature’ …

Thus, when we inquire of the deepest thinkers, ‘What is Nature’s most fundamental urge as manifested in man?’, we are not surprised to find them confirming the conclusions we have formed from our survey of animals and plants, and supporting the generalizations of both Plato and Nietzsche.

Aristotle says outright that all men aspire to ascendancy … Hobbes unhesitatingly concurs. ‘I put for a general inclination of all mankind’, he says, ‘a perpetual and restless desire of power after power, that ceaseth only in death’ … In the discourse entitled ‘Von der Selbst-Ueberwindung’ (On Self-Mastery) in *Thus Spake Zarathustra,* Nietzsche expounds the doctrine of the will to power as basic in man. But the principle is repeated in all his works and, especially in the two posthumous volumes of *The Will to Power*, is postulated of the universe in general …

So there appear to be substantial grounds for the view that a striving after supremacy or power is the basic trend of all Nature, and that Schopenhauer’s ‘will to live’, like the ‘struggle for existence’ of our nineteenth-century biologists, gives but an inadequate idea of the radical trend of the forces governing life’s processes. In other words, there is more in these forces than a mere readiness to vegetate or survive even on a lavish scale, and, unless we turn a blind eye to most of the more disturbing,

importunate and gratuitously obtrusive tendencies of both animals and plants, we are constrained to postulate a basic drive in Nature, more dynamic, convulsive, upsetting and consequently, of course, more ‘evil’ than merely the will to persist and keep one’s head above water.

Indeed, it must have struck the kind of thinker who has been led to read the will to power between the lines of Nature’s picture-book that it is otiose and romantic to hope ever to overcome what the moral idealists in our society regard as ‘evil’, unless means are found for uprooting from the character of every living thing, including man, this fundamental drive, acknowledged by many leading modern psychologists to be the will to power.

What can be the good, then, of speaking of ‘eternal peace’, or a future of ‘loving concord’ for all mankind, or of any state in which rivalry of some kind, violence, high-handed appropriation and expropriation, oppression of some kind, and discord have been wholly eliminated? What possible trace of realism remains in Shaw’s attribution of all wickedness to poverty, or in Marx’s implication that what men call ‘evil’ will disappear when once a classless society is established? …

To hold typically liberal views, therefore, and to assume that if we liked we could all settle down to love one another and live in perfect amity and harmony together, is possible only to those idealists who are congenitally blind to the true character of all life; whilst, as for those numbskulls who begin to see and think of the will to power only when figures like Napoleon, Stalin or Hitler appear, and who overlook it wholly in themselves, their wives, their children and their cat, they are even more dangerous than the idealists aforesaid, because they scent and suspect an awkward and unamiable feature of existence only when it is already thundering down upon them, and are like people who are not aware of the volcano at the end of their garden before they and their home are smothered in tons of burning lava.

It is very probable, however, that this one dynamic factor informing all living matter—the will to power—may be the major, if not the only, element in the life-forces which, by constantly contending with and often defeating the trends implicit in factors (a), (b) and (c), whose influence, if not actually favouring degeneration and survival by backward rather than forward steps, at least offers no potent resistance to it, has accounted for all

those triumphs of the evolutionary process, all those relatively rare but upward and progressive changes in both the vegetable and animal kingdoms that have culminated in producing the highest examples still extant of our plants and living creatures, including even man himself …

(e) The fifth conclusion which it seems to me legitimate to draw concerning the forces behind phenomena relates to their amorality, or their lack of all those moral principles with which civilized societies regulate human intercourse.

It hardly needs saying that in all Nature there is no trace of any such morality. On the contrary, every kind of thuggery, deception, fraud, duplicity and mendacity finds its ablest and most unscrupulous exponents in Nature. It is true that much of this criminality is designed to protect the creatures practising it, just as much of the thuggery contributes to their survival, but the practices in question remain dishonest and immoral (in our sense) notwithstanding. We find caterpillars imitating twigs to such perfection that their worst enemies fail to recognize them. We also see butterflies mimicking dried leaves and beetles resembling moss so exactly that their disguise completely deludes the rest of living creatures. On the other hand, we find innumerable species of harmless animals and insects protecting themselves by resembling noxious or dangerous species, or by actually descending to the ruse of representing excrement. The drone-fly, thanks to its mimicry of the large hive- or honey-bee, which is distasteful and has a sting, is left entirely alone. Many edible insects, in fact, save their lives by masquerading as inedible ones; among them are several species of ants, beetles and spiders. In animals, a good example of the same phenomenon is the little bush-dog of Guiana and Brazil, which, by closely approximating to the form and colour of the weasel-like tayra, protects himself from the attacks of pumas, jaguars and ocelots.

Often the deceptive mimicry works the other way about—that is to say, not to protect an insect or animal but to hoodwink its prey. Thus, the camouflage of stripes or cloudy patches on many cats’ coats, including those of the tiger and leopard, by imitating the play of light and shade in long grass or brushwood enables beasts of prey to approach the quarry, or to lie in ambush for it, whilst remaining unobserved. An Oriental tree-shrew, by its likeness to a squirrel, is enabled to approach and pounce on small birds or animals which mistake it for a vegetable-feeding squirrel. But of all these devices, whether for facilitating or preventing capture, the

fundamental feature is their mendacity, their intent to defraud, and this, in some form or another, is common to all life …

It is thus as hopeless to seek the sources of human morality in Nature as to try along evolutionary lines to derive it from obscure rudiments in natural phenomena. To this, however, it may be objected that since, as I have argued, man is not to be separated from Nature, his morality must be natural.

This is of course true. But it is natural only in the sense that honey or silk or a pearl is natural. Like them, however, it is a peculiar product of a particular species in special circumstances and not necessarily repeated elsewhere. In the social life of man, morality becomes a means, *sine qua non*, of regulating the customary conduct that made communal survival possible; hence the name. It curbed the instincts where they threatened to interfere with conduct that promoted orderly communal life, and controlled primitive impulses so as to adapt them to social order. Consequently, in the world of Nature, which is entirely run by instinct, morality plays no role and is not required to play any. Could it play such a role it would be wholly destructive. It is therefore not a necessarily pervasive feature of natural life and can no more be postulated of all Nature than can honey or silk. Indeed, except for theological purposes, there seems to be no reason whatsoever to extend its incidence outside human societies, and only sentimentalists feel the need of imagining it mirrored in the world about them. From the point of view of the man investigating the attributes of the forces governing life's processes, it is thus only misleading to speak of Nature as 'amoral' for, to us humans, Nature, unless we wish to mince matters, is frankly immoral and behaves in a way that conflicts radically with what is called 'moral' in our societies …

(f) The sixth conclusion to which a steady and careful study of Nature inevitably leads us is that wherever there is living matter, whether in the human brain or in a blade of grass, there also shall we find intelligence. Every particle of live matter is, we know, composed of cells which, individually and by the simple fact that they are alive, give evidence of intelligent activity. In fact, we are compelled to look on life and intelligence as so inextricably welded together as to be thought of only as coextensive.

At this moment of history, with everyone steeped in the dualistic doctrine that views the living world as consisting of matter *and* mind, it is difficult to imagine and to affirm the indissoluble unity of these two aspects of life.

Willy-nilly, however, unable as we may feel to separate living matter from intelligence, we nevertheless find ourselves insensibly inclining to the view that it is twofold. So long have we been inured to the false dichotomy, ‘body and soul’, that we see it mirrored everywhere, despite our knowledge of the fact that it implies a separateness of which we have not the slightest evidence …

To speak of the life of even the simplest protozoan, or of the lowliest cell in any animal or vegetable body, is therefore tantamount to asserting both its vitality and intelligence. For it turns out that there is no knowledge of the two ever being asunder. No matter what comfort this may incidentally afford to morons, it cannot be too emphatically stated that to assume any dualism here, as even the most distinguished scientists and philosophers are wont to do, is to commit oneself to endless confusions and to inferences for which there are no incontestable grounds. To return for the moment to the moron, it therefore seems probable that whilst perhaps his highest rational faculties may be defective, his individual body cells, of which he is alleged to possess about 60 billion, must certainly retain their intelligence, otherwise he would cease to live.

The sixteenth-century wizard, Giordano Bruno, knew this intuitively. He was so deeply convinced that intelligence was ubiquitous throughout the whole structure of the universe that in 1587 he declared it the property even of ‘stones and the most imperfect things’ … Nor, if we accept the evolutionary theory, is it possible to doubt what must four centuries ago have appeared the most extravagant nonsense. For if, as all evolutionists agree, at some time or other organic must have sprung from inorganic matter, and if the former is in every sense conterminous with intelligence, a primordial and rudimentary form of intelligence must have been latent and inherent in ‘stones and the most imperfect things’ …

Even if we deny these body-cells intelligence, we must at least grant them memory—the remembrance of the work which for eons they have been called upon to perform, whether for constant maintenance, repair or the construction of whole organs. It was evidently some such thought that led Dr Ewald Hering, the eminent German physiologist, to postulate ‘memory as a general function of organic matter’ …

(g) The seventh conclusion to which, by innumerable signs, Nature eventually directs us is that, as far as we are able to judge, the forces

governing life's processes are omnipotent and inexhaustible in their resourcefulness. From the infinite variety of their expedients and inventions we are bound to infer that nothing is impossible to them. The unfailing brilliance of their solutions of the most baffling problems partakes in our eyes of the quality of magic …

There is in fact no problem, however abstruse and apparently insoluble, which we do not see the forces of Nature solve with the utmost virtuosity, and in contemplating the infallibility of their methods we are driven willy-nilly to the conviction that an intelligence very much higher than any we know must be a pervasive quality of living matter.

From the smallest mammal—the English Lesser Shrew (*Sorex pygmacus*), hardly two inches in length and a little over an ounce in weight—to the largest of all—the Blue Whale (*Balaenoptera musculus*), which may be 89 feet long, whose liver alone weighs a ton, whose heart weighs 1000 lb and whose total weight is 136 tons (i.e., the total weight of twenty-seven elephants)—we find in the animal world alone so much at which to stare in speechless wonder, and so many conundrums brilliantly solved, that we abandon all doubt concerning the uncanny omnipotence of Nature's life-forces …

(h) We now come to the seventh major conclusion concerning the attributes of the life-forces deduced from a study of living beings, and, as this conclusion is the outcome of a narrow scrutiny of the factors of organic evolution, we are here probably on the trail of the most secret methods by which the life-forces achieve their ends.

The fact that all species of plants and animals, from the lowest to the highest, have in the course of ages evolved from some kind of primordial matter which must have come into existence—how, we do not know—via an assumed series of transformations, from dust, through crystals, enzymes and filterable viruses, is now admitted by all investigators. Also undisputed … is the fact that the living matter composing all plants and animals consists of myriads of cells, all of which are able to perform the functions necessary for the nourishment, growth, repair and adaptation to environment of the vegetable or animal bodies which they compose.

Less general agreement, however, prevails regarding the capacity inherent in each cell which enables it to perform these vital functions and to regulate its actions so as to execute, or work out, what has been called its 'blueprint' or 'template'—that is to say, the plan of its individual being. As

we have seen, the ineluctable conclusion to which this inherent capacity of the cell leads us is that it has a psychological property, recognized by a number of authorities as ‘memory’, but which in final analysis is seen to be equivalent to intelligence. For, where memory prompts purposive action, we cannot deny it intelligence, and we are driven to a belief in the unexceptional association of all living matter with intelligence. Indeed, the two appear to be everywhere coextensive and indissoluble, and to infer a dualism from their coexistence can lead only to confusion and incoherence …

Thus, only can we understand purposeful adaptation, whether in plant or animal, as a process in which memory and intelligence cooperate, and when Dr Erasmus Darwin (in *Botanical Garden,* ‘Vegetable animation’, 1791) declared that, ‘The individuals of the vegetable world may be considered as inferior or less perfect animals’, he hinted at this idea. 143 years later, Sir J. Arthur Thomson merely echoed the doctor-poet when he said: ‘There is something of the animal in many a plant, and something of the plant in many an animal’ … The Venus flytrap, which quickly closes its toothed bilobed blade when an insect touches its sensitive hairs, abundantly confirms this claim …

The fundamental problems of adaptation to ambient conditions, variation and natural selection—or the survival of the fittest, as these processes occur in Nature to effect the evolutionary march of life—are insoluble if we approach them without always assuming some sort of intelligence in living matter, and here it seems to me that biologists like Darwin, Haeckel and their followers, and philosophers like Spencer, unnecessarily hampered themselves and invited the justifiable attack of lay thinkers like Nietzsche and Samuel Butler. Hence the justice of Professor McDougall’s description of Darwin’s theory of evolution as ‘a theory denying by implication all other agency and influence than the mechanical’ …

In the 1876 edition of *Origin of Species* Darwin said: ‘We are profoundly ignorant of the cause of each variation or individual difference’. Again, in the 1883 edition of *The Descent of Man* … he said: ‘With respect to the causes of variability, we are in all cases very ignorant’. This means that up to the moment of the actual appearance in any organism of features differentiating it, however slightly, from its ancestors, the Darwinian biologists know nothing concerning the history of such features. As Alfred Tylor observed: ‘The great difficulty in Mr Darwin’s works is the fact that

he starts with variations ready-made, without trying as a rule to account for them, and then shows that if these varieties are beneficial the possessor has a better chance in the great struggle for existence, and the accumulation of such variations will give rise to a new species' …

The earlier evolutionists did at least try to account for the origin of new features, and Lamarck … suggested a theory of their origin which, if true, implied the cooperation of the following important factors:

(a) A constructive and organizing power in the living organism, which in response to appropriate stimulation, even of an emotional or merely imaginative kind, could initiate structural changes and concentrations of energy, with corresponding modifications in the germ-plasm.

(b) A capacity in the soma and germ-plasm to respond to such stimulation, provided always that it is given with adequate intensity and in strict accordance with the only conditions under which such stimulation can work …

What, then, are the disconnected facts, the underlying relation of which would have vindicated Lamarck, shed important light on the evolutionary process and simultaneously explained many a problem connected with religion and religious practice?

I suggest that they are, on the one hand, biological variation occurring under special circumstances, which we shall examine, and, on the other, those facts, positive knowledge of which has been recently acquired (although acted upon blindly for thousands of years), proving that it is possible for living organisms, and certainly for man (although perhaps less possible for him), to influence, and even to enlist the cooperation of, the formative, improvisatory and innovatory forces of living matter.

In other words, I suggest that it is now legitimate to postulate the feasibility of reaching and summoning to any activity whatsoever, and with any object (i.e., evil or benign), the hidden constructive and improvising forces operating incessantly in living matter, although these forces are normally inaccessible and unamenable to the conscious mental faculties of animals and man, and are in any case totally refractory in all circumstances to any volitional effort on the part of either beasts or human beings.

I intend to make a further claim, and to suggest that it is now probably consistent with acknowledged facts to say that we can reach and stimulate to any activity whatsoever (evil or benign) these same hidden forces even

outside and beyond the range of our own living organism. It will, however, be noticed that in this connection I say ‘probably’, as I do not regard this claim as nearly so well-established as the former one. For the moment I shall be concerned only with the former claim.

It is common knowledge that for centuries mankind have been aware of their capacity, in certain not wholly conscious states, of contacting and summoning to activity powers in their bodies not normally under their control. In the East, among the religious devotees of Tibet and the yogis of Hindustan, and, nearer home, among the dervishes of Algiers, this has been a familiar fact for a much longer period than in Europe …

Now, apart from the successful use of hypnotism in surgery and midwifery … in the hypnotic state it appears to be possible to call into activity forces which, in the normal state, are quite inaccessible and cannot be mobilized. Nor should it ever be forgotten—as it always is forgotten, even by scientists when attempting to disparage parallels drawn between the relatively slight and superficial bodily phenomena induced under hypnotism and the deeper and relatively more elaborate phenomena of bodily change in living organisms, effected during the process of evolution—that the results obtained by hypnotism are all spontaneous, if not actually instantaneous, whilst Nature’s ultimate transformations, achieved by means of what Sir Julian Huxley calls ‘mainly small mutations’ … have unlimited time at their disposal.

How does an authority like McDougall describe the condition of the hypnotized subject? He says ‘increased suggestibility is its essential symptom’. That is true enough; but it is not enough, because, added to the increased suggestibility is the patient’s singular capacity to get into touch with the formative and usually inaccessible forces inherent in living matter, which in his unhypnotized state he is quite unaware of and incapable of mobilizing or of stirring to any activity whatsoever. We are therefore entitled to infer that, if the living organism is to be capable of activating the formative and improvisatory forces inherent in its cells, it is of paramount importance that its volition should be suspended and that only a suggestion of any desired effect should reach them. For the essential condition of the subject’s ability to activate the forces in question is his total surrender of his conscious mind, and above all of his volition, to the hypnotist; and, be it noted, not to the hypnotist’s will, as many assume, but only to his suggestions. If we lose sight of this crucial fact, we are unable to understand

not only the phenomenon of hypnotism but many kindred phenomena which I shall now discuss, including some of the more fundamental aspects of religious practice …

We have but to read Charles Baudouin's *Suggestion and Auto-Suggestion* … in which many impressive results of Coué's method are recorded, in order to appreciate that not only in therapeutics but in every field of human endeavour, mental and physical, Coué's technique for enlisting, or more properly invoking, the formative and improvisatory forces latent in living matter at once frees us from the cumbersome necessity of hypnotism and, what is even more important, provides us with the rationale of bodily changes brought about in states of suspended volition …

Sir Julian Huxley tells us that 'it is mainly small mutations which are of importance in evolution' … and … not only Lamarck but also other evolutionists, including Darwin, give us ample grounds for connecting variation with changes in environment …

On the other hand, persistence of type for as long as millions of years, as for instance in Amphioxus, Heterodontus and Sphenodon, in lung-fish and lamp-shells, and even in such mammals as opossums, hedgehogs, dogs, pigs and lemurs, points, as many biologists suppose, to a certain constancy in the circumstances of these creatures' lives. Thus, Sir Julian tells us that 'there has been no improvement in birds, regarded as machines for flying, for perhaps 20 million years, none in insects for more than 30', both of which facts seem to indicate that the creatures concerned have during all these ages found little amiss in their mastery of their environment, and, since any such failing would indicate an environmental change sufficient to account for it, it seems probable that in one respect at least their conditions have been stable. 'Some less advanced types of organization', Sir Julian continues, 'such as lung-fish and lamp-shells, have remained unchanged for 300 million years or more' …

The facts seem to indicate that variation and mutation (I refer to the 'small mutations' important in evolution), far from being universal or inevitable, more probably represent the organism's reaction to any change in the environment which disturbs an equilibrium previously established between it and its conditions. This appears the more likely when we learn from Professor J.B.S. Haldane that the 'genes for a major character, say hair density, may be replaced rather rapidly in response to environmental

change’ … for in this example we have a change which may be very adverse and dangerous for the organism, and the fact that the state of distress thus created provokes a rapid readjustment, of the kind described, lends colour to the view that variation and mutation are organic responses to any environmental change serious enough to destroy the harmony previously established between the organism and its milieu …

Thus, when we try to picture what takes place in the psychophysical system of living organisms, especially of those lower in the evolutionary scale than man, which are less intellectual and conscious than he is, when an environmental change provokes a readjustment, whether of bodily structure, behaviour or both, we must suppose that the effort or striving or desire, which Lamarck postulated as the factor initiating adaptive modifications, amounts to the organism’s confining its mental response to the new conditions, to a mute aspiration which, translated into human terms, would be expressed by no more than the words ‘Oh, help! If only I could get out of this’ or ‘Oh, mercy! If only those of my members concerned could deal with it’.

The efforts amount to a blind SOS in which the desired end is imagined and its accomplishment assumed as inevitable. In the organisms lower than man, no volition would accompany these mute aspirations, because will implies the conception either of some definite thing willed or some definite power that will can urge or impress.

The creatures lower than man, knowing of no means—not knowing, for instance, that fins may be changed into limbs—leave the means to Nature or the life-forces, and only imagine successful adaptation, not narrowly defined, lying ahead. They only ardently desire a happy consummation. The most they might do, as we shall see, is to picture themselves in imagination surmounting the difficulties the changed environment confronts them with. And as there is no limit to the power and resource of the life-forces, the most intricate and ingenious means of overcoming these difficulties are generally found. The fact that this is not always so is suggested by the evidence we have of the sudden extinction of certain animal species, as in the period between the Tertiary and the Eocene.

What creatures lower than man, however, never do is to doubt their success in ultimately overcoming an environmental change, because doubt presupposes some conception of the possibility, feasibility or probability of

an individual modification, and that conception they cannot have. It is man's intellect that here is prone to defeat his purpose, and Troward says quite correctly that 'our intellect becomes the greatest hindrance to our success, for it only helps to increase our doubts' …

Now, there is nothing mystical or magical in this intervention of the formative and improvisatory powers latent in living matter in order to produce the organic changes needed for a successful response to an environmental change. It is simply the slow operation in Nature of processes observed to occur spontaneously and, consequently, on a much less elaborate scale in human beings subjected to hypnotism or practising passive auto-suggestion. Nor do all human beings necessarily differ fundamentally from animals in the way they respond to environmental difficulties. Many, though a small minority probably, have retained the animal's faculty of contacting and mobilizing the life forces directly by simply visualizing desired ends without any component of will or doubt …

It is, however, man's fatal misfortune that all the immense advantages his consciousness affords him are heavily outweighed in most of his species by introducing into human desires and aspirations two factors absent from the animal's more subconscious thought: doubt and volition. By jeopardizing his chances of seeing his aspirations realized, they lead to endless frustration and despair … Only in religion has man—instinctively, presumably—lighted upon the means for mitigating this twofold evil. But as we shall see, even in religion he has not wholly circumvented it.

We have but to think of what the result would be if a hypnotist, in suggesting to a subject that the cold key he is about to lay on her arm was really white-hot, added the proviso, 'If it really is white-hot' …

Whether we are entitled … to assume that the suggestions thrown out intensively by an ardently aspiring being can reach the life-forces outside our own selves; whether, that is to say, we may believe that we are able by suggestion to move, as it were, the cosmic life-forces to affect the course of our own or other people's lives, is a question much more difficult to decide than that which has occupied us in the foregoing discussion. But if there is truth in telepathy, clairvoyance and in the alleged terrifying powers of primitive medicine-men and shamans to inflict curses upon people, it seems as if there must be means of moving the cosmic forces through suggestion to produce effects beyond ourselves. The data regarding the unfailing

efficacy of medicine-men's curses are certainly too well-authenticated to be lightly dismissed, and many scientists have already expressed their belief in telepathy …

[T]he fact in question is that, in all religions, it is not the peculiar features that differentiate them one from the other that constitute the more sound, more impregnable aspect of their character; it is not their peculiar creeds, dogmata, metaphysical and ethical systems, hopes and fears, nor are these peculiar features the part of them that is most immune to destructive analysis and criticism. On the contrary, these are the least sound, most perishable parts, the parts most deserving both of criticism and destructive analysis. On the other hand, it is that aspect of them which consists in the manner of their observance, their physical drill, so to speak, which by its uniformity, almost throughout the whole of the human world, unites and stamps them as castings from a common mould; it is this aspect of them alone which is sound, unassailable and indestructible, if not immutable. Thus, not what mankind have here and there believed, not how they have interpreted the nature of the power behind phenomena, has been the rock of ages found on immutable truth, but the way their divination led them to order the kinaesthetics of the ritual of their religion, no matter what its tenets might happen to be. Indeed, the creeds and dogmata of the various religions more often act as hindrances rather than as aids to a proper religious life. Certainly this is the case in England today …

Thus, if in accordance with this conclusion, we study one of the most basic ritualistic features common to most religions—the posture of the religious man in the act of worship and supplication—we find a striking similarity between them. Whether we turn to Islam or Hinduism, to the ancient Hebraic religion or to Christianity—aye, even if we turn to the religion of the old Assyrian states—we invariably find that the posture assumed by the worshipper and petitioner is of a kind which psychologically spells self-surrender, the suspension of personal volition. In plain English, we find prostration, genuflexion or at least the sinking of the body and the bowing of the head as the posture of choice for the worshipper, especially in appealing as a supplicant to his godhead. The whole attitude is symbolical of the sentiment, 'Not my will, but thine be done' (Luke 22.42).

'And at the evening of the sacrifice', says Ezra, 'I arose from my heaviness; and having rent my garment and my mantle, I fell upon my

knees and spread out my hands unto the Lord my God' (Ezra 9.5) …

It is always the same pattern. Genuflexion and the gathering of the body together in an attitude of will-less subjection … seems to be man's natural reaction to the emotion accompanying self-surrender and humble supplication. Even among unsophisticated primitives this appears to be so, and in Christianity as early as St Basil (AD 330–379) kneeling was described as the lesser, and prostration as the greater, penance. Wherever the denial of any velleity to self-assertion, self-sufficiency or self-affirmation is the dominant mood, men almost universally and certainly instinctively fall into the posture instantly recognizable as expressing the abandonment of self-direction. Only when they praise or thank their deity do they stand, because in praise and thanksgiving they strike a personal note, express a personal appreciation and offer personal judgements for acceptance. Hence the posture during the recitation of the Psalms and in the singing of hymns.

It is, however, most important to bear in mind that the posture has not merely an objective significance. Even more vitally significant than its instinctive character and its impression on the onlooker is its subjective influence on the individual worshipper or supplicant himself, for its effect on his mind is to help him suspend volition. Apart from any emotions that may accompany it, qua poise it suggests to the mind of the supplicant the very mood or state most favourable to the success of his petition—namely, the abdication of his will. Indeed, it would be difficult to imagine a more ingeniously effective method of suspending will power than the assumption of the one posture in the whole repertory of human muscular adjustments—falling on the knees, the sinking of the body into relaxed folds from which all tenseness has been banished—which most persuasively eliminates will power …

Indeed, its very antiquity, its roots in the animal world of millions of years ago, causes it to be so unmistakable, so instinctive, that the sense of compulsion which forces men in religious supplication to fall on their knees and make all the muscular adjustments compatible with the suspension of volition is probably but a hang-over, a vigorous age-long and immortal vestige of that instinct in animals which, operating in response to an untoward environmental change, places them in imagination in touch with the life-forces and enables them to mobilize formative and improvisatory powers that secure improved adaptation …

Let me give but one example to illustrate this, drawn from an experience often enough repeated in my lifetime, the rationale of which nevertheless remained unperceived and even unsuspected by those chiefly concerned with the relevant events.

Again and again, I have noticed that, when in a family of only two sisters one is uncommonly comely and the other correspondingly plain, the more comely one has been exposed throughout her life to the direst peril, and that her death has often enough occurred before her twenty-first birthday, without either her plain sister or her parents being in the least aware of what has actually happened. Indeed, I have known the grief of the plain sister over her bereavement to be so passionate that she has been prostrate for days after the funeral ceremony. I could mention the names of several families who have suffered in this way. Whether the pressure of the suggestion coming from every quarter in such a family, to the effect that little sisters should love one another and, when decent, do love one another most ardently—whether this influence causes the evil subconscious wishes to be buried unduly deeply, and thus to be free from the interference of volition and doubt, we do not know. But it seems probable that something of the sort actually happens, especially in a country like England, where the whole onus of dressing her own window, as it were, and of seeking and securing a sexual mate, is most inhumanely left to the young girl herself. This naturally and willy-nilly creates a situation in which fierce competition is inevitable. No doubt much of this unfortunate rivalry is conscious and therefore the dark wishes it may inspire, by becoming mingled with volition and doubt, cease to be dangerous. But where, owing to the pressure of the conventional code, these wishes are driven under, they easily become lethal. For what is too often forgotten both by Christian theorists and even agnostic anthropologists is that the life-forces are quite immoral and therefore accept all prompting indiscriminately. Otherwise, how are we to explain the thoroughly well-authenticated cases of the fulfilment of a shaman’s curses? On the theory of the Christian god’s impeccable morality they are quite unaccountable … The French are wont to say: ‘N’est pas diable qui veut’.[7] With equal accuracy it might be claimed that ‘N’est pas religieux qui veut’.[8] For it is not only a matter of keeping volition at bay. Prayer also depends for its efficacy on the amount of concentration, imaginative power and passionate desire we are capable of. In these democratic days we frivolously assume that everyone can love and feel deeply; we endow

everybody with the gift of enduring attachment and the capacity to stay the course in passion. Similarly, we quite gratuitously assume that everyone can pray and perform those rites and exercises in contacting the life-forces which are akin to prayer and the results of which may be disclosed as either benign or evil. Yet the increasing incidence of wrecked marriages, and the rapidly loosening hold that religion has on all modern people, never seem to awaken us to the gravity of our error in expecting of all our fellow-men and -women mastery in activities which depend above all on ardent sensibilities and enduring passion. Because in love, as in prayer, as also in the inflexible adherence to any direction or aim, it is character, depth, stamina and singleness of purpose that are fundamental, and what chiefly stamps our age is shallowness, languor, neurasthenia, weakness and more especially plural and conflicting impulses contending in the same human breast. For this reason, apart from the widespread ignorance of the technique of prayer and its kindred exercises, it is extremely rare to find anyone far removed from the rude forest vigour of primitive mankind who is able to love or to pray, since ordinary competence in either of these undertakings depends on much the same temperamental integrity and strength. Hence the difficulty a modern psychologist may feel in hiding his misgivings when any average young person today speaks of his or her love as of a phenomenon that will halt the stars in their courses.

It is facts of this nature that are too often, if not habitually, left out of the account in estimating the efficacy of the various means of approaching and mobilizing the life-forces, and in the pronouncement of imprecations and curses. Yet, unless we allow for the factor of personality and the endowments of the individual man or woman who prays or employs some occult means of influencing the life-forces, how can we assess the efficacy of the means used? To condemn them offhand as myths or as ineffective without first scrutinizing their users would be as foolish as to disparage a 12-bore gun because it had made no kill, before we ascertained the marksmanship of its user. It is all the more important to be cautious in this respect, seeing that we live in an age in which debility, nervous prostration, general constitutional inferiority and instability of character are common to all classes of the community, and that consequently the qualities demanded of a good lover and of a competent man of religion have hardly ever been so scarce as they are today in modern northwestern Europe … (*Religion for Infidels,* pp. 146–254)

Chapter 2

CONSERVATISM

If Ludovici had his due, he would be regarded as a great conservative thinker. As things stand, though, he is virtually unknown in European and American conservative circles. For example, Russell Kirk's The Conservative Mind *(London, 1954) never even mentions Ludovici, and neither does Roger Scruton's* The Meaning of Conservatism *(London, 2nd edition, 1984). The truth is, Ludovici's brand of conservatism would annoy the economic liberals who nowadays go by the name of conservative. He wasn't obsessed by economic doctrines, he never tried to curry favour with minority groups, and he didn't shift his position every few years to oblige liberals.*

Ludovici summed up his ideas about the conservative outlook in A Defence of Conservatism, *one of his best books. In it he explained that conservatives should believe in ruralism, because country folk have a more realistic view of life. Ludovici himself belonged to the English Mistery and the English Array, two little-known groups of the 1930s that promoted ruralism, English nationalism and decentralization.*[9] *Ludovici also believed in human inequality, and argued that hierarchies alone can order people according to their worth. And he believed in tradition, because high culture arises only over long periods of time in stable societies. But he rejected tradition for the sake of it. As Chapter 1 of this anthology explains, he wanted to clear away Christianity and replace it with a more rational outlook. Apart from the ideas advanced in this chapter, for Ludovici's conservative outlook see especially Chapter 3 (on Liberalism) and Chapter 8 (on Economics).*

Unlike the weather-vane conservatives who rely on an ad hoc approach to problems, Ludovici envisioned that a conservative ideology could be a bulwark against the West's creeping socialism and liberalism. As the character of Arthur Maximilian Landrassy, who is of course Ludovici in disguise, explains in the novel What Woman Wishes *(p. 67):*

> *[Y]ou cannot fight ideas with machine-guns. You can kill a few men with machine-guns, but the ideas that have animated those men remain, they survive to animate other people. What's the good of that? You can only destroy an idea by means of another idea. Ideas must be*

fought and beaten with ideas. If the ideas behind Bolshevism are unsound, they must be frustrated and opposed by sound ideas.

Tradition

Man is instinctively conservative in the sense that probably millions of years of experience have taught him that a stable environment is the best for peace of mind, present and future security, automatism of action (that action which requires least thought), and a ready command of material and artificial circumstances. It is the genial innovator or the lunatic who disturbs peace of mind by introducing an unaccustomed and unaccountable element into life. It is the dislocation of economic conditions that makes the present and future doubtful. It is the repeated introduction of new instruments, new weapons, new methods and needs for fresh adaptations that makes automatism impossible. And it is the complication of life by novel contributions to life's interests and duties that makes a ready command of circumstances difficult.

The influences which make mankind instinctively conservative are, therefore, the love of safety, the tendency to indolence and the preference for the known before the unknown.

In this sense conservatism is of enormous value, because it is only in a stable environment that the slow work of heredity can build up family qualities, group virtues, national character and racial characteristics. And if these things are desirable, a stable environment and consequently conservatism are desirable. (*A Defence of Conservatism*, pp. 1–2)

The claim of the alert and live conservative politician should … be that he wishes to preserve the identity of his nation throughout change, and that, in this effort to preserve his nation's identity throughout change, he takes as his model the best and most characteristic types which his nation has produced. But if this be his claim, he is committed to the further claims:

(a) That he wishes to preserve the national character, with all that this means in the safeguarding of a native and particular potentiality for success, mastery and sanity in certain well-defined callings, environmental conditions and opportunities for self-expression and expansion.

(b) That he wishes to preserve the national health, not only because ill-health means maladaptation and therefore a non-creative desire for change, but also because it leads to the decay of national strength,

capacity and character. To be a good forester a man must know how to give trees their proper health conditions, and he must also know how and when to chop and prune them. In the words of Tennyson:

That man’s a true Conservative

Who lops the mouldered branch away.

(c) That in criticising agitations for change, he knows how, or takes care to learn how, to distinguish between the demands coming from a redundance of spirit and capacity, which if gratified may lead to national progress, and the demands coming from impoverished spirit and capacity, which if gratified must inevitably lead to national decline. But even in examining the first-named demands for change he must bear in mind that not all change, even of an apparently progressive kind, is necessarily compatible with the national character and physique.

(d) That in criticising agitations for change coming from the unhappy, he knows how, or takes care to learn how, to distinguish between maladaptation arising from injustice and oppression and maladaptation which is the outcome of degeneracy and morbid natures. By meeting the demands of the first he will achieve improvement, if not progress. By meeting the demands of the second he may do no more than penalize the whole nation and reduce its vigour and its standards.

(e) That he wishes to maintain the national prestige, because prestige is power, and power is safety, and safety is security for the present and future.

(f) That he knows enough about the character and potentialities of his people, and about the eternal characteristics of healthy mankind in general, to be able to judge whether new tendencies are possible or fantastic (i.e., whether they are in keeping with the eternal nature of men, or the particular character of his nation, or whether they apply only to angels, goblins, fairies or other romantic fictions, who alone seem to suit the exigencies of hundreds of modern hare-brained schemes).

Hence he believes in the advisability of having as politicians not only men who can lay some valid claim to a knowledge of humanity, but also men who belong to the stock of those whose policy they are called upon to direct. He also disbelieves, therefore, in having Jews or

men of foreign extraction or odd people—that is to say, eccentrics, cranks and fanatics—as politicians in an English Parliament.

(g) That he is deeply concerned about the happiness and the heart of the people of his nation, because unhappiness and dejection are the most frequent cause of a demand for change which is by no means necessarily creative or progressive.

(h) That in dealing with the *vis major* which threatens to enforce changes on the nation from outside he knows how to be prepared, to act firmly and swiftly, and with the whole front of his nation's strength against the enemy. Because the *vis major* comes as a result of an extension of power on the part of another nation. The conservative politician is, however, only concerned with securing the extension of his own nation's power and cannot therefore tolerate anything that jeopardises or limits this extension. It is often argued that unpreparedness for the *vis major* is in itself a sign of inadequate or feeble government or culture. This, however, is not always true. A nation cannot equip itself like the White Knight in *Alice Through the Looking-Glass* for every possible emergency. The effort to do so would in all probability bring down its whole culture with a crash. For instance, how could the Peruvians or Mexicans have prepared for the Spaniards, seeing that they did not know of their existence? If the government of a nation are to be expected to prepare for every emergency, known and unknown, then no limit can be described to the precautions they ought to take. Who can tell what the other planets hold in store for us? Are we to cover ourselves entirely with a steel roof in anticipation of the approaching incursion into terrestrial atmosphere of the inhabitants of some distant heavenly body? … In criticising conservative Peru, Mexico and even ancient Egypt, in criticising also great conservative civilizations like that of China, that of India and even that of the Bushmen of Africa, we should therefore hesitate before too hastily condemning the politicians of these countries for their unpreparedness, because, in anticipating unknown emergencies, for the purpose of preserving a nation, it is possible to go beyond that nation's strength and thus to defeat the very object which politicians are supposed to serve.

Summing up, therefore, we may say that esoteric conservatism is the preservation of the national identity throughout the processes of change by

a steady concern about quality in the whole of the nation's life. (*A Defence of Conservatism*, pp. 17–21)

The opposition of a great conservative like the seventh Earl of Shaftesbury to the Reform Bills of 1832 and 1867, and the Ballot Act of 1872, was … not due to his dislike of the people or to his inhumanity, for he was the most solicitous guardian of the people's welfare that has ever lived. It was due to his Tory conviction that, provided a gifted leader of the people understands his duties and responsibilities, he is more valuable to them as a champion of their cause than as a chosen instrument of their wayward will. This does not mean that the conservative does not believe in liberty, self-reliance and independence. An English conservative, indeed, must believe in these possessions, for they are characteristic of the finest qualities of the race. But in state administration liberty without knowledge or wisdom may mean disaster. The utmost liberty of the subject in his private life with the utmost guidance of his will in national politics is the conservative ideal. Thus the true conservative politician conceives his political activity as a responsible function of patriarchalism. He does not think it wise to allow a child to play with what it cannot understand, particularly if its national permanence is at stake.

He knows that futile change can result from unhappiness and generally does result from unhappiness. Indeed, he is aware that 'indignation is often the mainspring of political activity', and thus insists on keeping the people happy. Charles I, who was probably the first great Tory, strove all through his reign to keep the people of England happy, and this aim has characterised the best conservatives down to Disraeli, who … maintained that 'power has only one duty: to secure the social welfare of the people'. Charles I's opponents, on the other hand, who were the lineal ancestors of the Whigs and the modern Liberals and radicals, never cared about the happiness of the people. They thought more of saving the people *malgré eux* than of securing their contentment.

The conservative believes in private property, but he never wishes to divorce property from responsibility; on the contrary, the greater the property, the more he insists on its holder being aware of the duties it imposes. This is a principle that governs the whole of ancient feudalism, and it descends through history down the Tory and Conservative line. Men like Strafford and, later, Cobbett and Sadler, were believers in it, and when Thomas Drummond, Under-Secretary for Ireland in 1839, declared that

‘property has its duties as well as its rights’, he spoke as a true Conservative, although he was a member of a Whig government. The conservative … must take care of the character of the people, but he also believes in preserving their health, because this, in a flourishing nation, is just as much an essential part of their identity as their natural disposition. The Jews, the Hindus, the Egyptians held the same belief. ‘A great statesman’s first thought’, Disraeli once said, ‘must be for the health of the people’.

Because he believes in character, health, good taste and pure stock, the conservative must always be opposed to miscegenation and the flooding of his country with foreigners. If the identity of the nation is to be preserved, its people must be protected against blood contamination. Thus, although conservatives may be courteous and hospitable to the foreigner, they ought never to allow this attitude to extend to the toleration of marriages between the people of the country and the foreigner, or to the granting of too great facilities for foreign settlers.

But, above all, the true conservative entertains no high-falutin’ notions about the alleged radical goodness of human nature. All his political schemes, whether they deal with home or foreign relations, are always therefore conceived on the assumption that guile, egotism, acquisitiveness, venality, lust of power, abuse of power and duplicity are likely to be manifested by the groups of humanity concerned, and consequently he is not prone to imagine utopias or ideal states, which, in order to be successful, must be supported and maintained by angels of virtue and self-effacement. He knows, moreover, that no class in the community has a monopoly of goodness and never imagines, therefore, that the elevation of a particular class above another will necessarily establish the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth. His reading of human nature abides by the realism of his judgements concerning other matters, and he refuses to dally with sentimental notions like fraternity and universal love, however pleasantly these notions may stir the hearts of his less thoughtful constituents. (*A Defence of Conservatism,* pp. 57–60)

Realism

The classic or realistic thought is that which survives because it is in harmony with some eternal law of the human mind. It cannot fail to appeal to each succeeding generation of humanity, because it is eternally valid. Aesop’s fables are eternally valid. Some of Plato’s and Aristotle’s writings

are eternally valid. The eighth book of *The Republic* contains probably the greatest number of eternal truths that have ever been packed into one political essay. It is realistic in the sense that it is capable of everlasting application. And the same might be said of much that Homer, Aristophanes, Horace and Tacitus said and wrote. Aristotle's *Poetics* contains a canon for dramatic poetry which can never be surpassed for the accuracy of its psychological analyses. It is realistic and permanent, and therefore classic, because, unless human nature changes beyond recognition, it will always be valid.

Thus in anything that is classic we may expect to discover the reality that has secured its permanence, and that reality will be the eternal law which it exemplifies and applies. Classicism is thus realism—the profoundest realism (with quality of matter, expression, material and treatment always understood in its concrete examples). And since conservatives are concerned about the problem of permanence, they must be both classicists and realists.

But classicism is frequently spoken of as standing in opposition to romanticism. What is meant by this antithesis?

We need only examine the products of romanticism in order to understand it. But, first of all, it is interesting to remember the origin of romanticism. It was the creation of the Middle Ages. As a word, its origin reveals its fantastic nature. It is derived from the old form of *roman* (*romant*), which was the earliest fictitious history or tale of Western civilization. The ideas it suggests are not to be separated from the age in which romanticism was born. And what was that age? It was an age in which mankind was trying to achieve an impossible compromise, an impracticable feat: to reconcile the demands of ordinary human existence with the demands of a religious philosophy which, for all practical purposes, might have been addressed to a generation of disembodied spirits. The extreme 'otherworldliness' of early Christianity, its ascetic ideal, its rigid negativism had suddenly become the aspiration of a world only just roused from barbarism. The rude instincts, the rugged stamina and the keen appetites of humanity, still very largely unsophisticated and untamed by civilization, were expected to masquerade as the mild virtues of heavenly angels. In attempting to carry out this feat, the Roman world, during the first five centuries of our era, had gone almost mad …

But what had happened meanwhile to the European populations who had striven to reconcile the two conflicting demands, that of the Church and that of life? What was the expression of the civilization created by this conflict?

In literature it produced the fantastic, the bizarre and wholly unreal world of *romance*, in which the situations of the story or plot are as outlandish as the psychology is strained. This literature, which, like many of the other artistic features of the period, took its origin in France, is admitted by its most friendly critics to be unparalleled for the wildness of its conceits …

In the graphic arts … it is possible to trace all through the early and later Middle Ages the influence of the same fantastic conflict. The body of man is transformed by degrees into the eccentric type that seemed compatible with the unworldly ideal of asceticism. We see the Gothic figure ever more and more tenuous, more emaciated and more morbid as the years roll on. According to a Byzantine canon of the eleventh century, the human body is actually declared to be a monstrosity measuring nine heads. All trace of Polycleitus's sane and realistic canon has disappeared. The people look so elongated, spiritual and heaven-aspiring that it seems as if they could not even stand up, while the ugliness of their contorted features causes the spectator to wonder what could have overtaken humanity after the days of the beautiful Athenians …

It is, however, in the architecture of the period that the equation Unreal = Romantic = Impermanent finds its most convincing expression. For in the Gothic edifice all the impossible and terrible self-torture imposed by a fantastic ideal find their counterpart in brick or stone …

The association of impermanence with romanticism, owing to the fact that the latter is not based on eternal laws, is a feature that clings to every aspect of non-classic or unrealistic thinking and construction, and the fundamental difference between the classic or real and the romantic or unreal is therefore of immense importance to conservatives, who are concerned with the problem of permanence.

It should not be forgotten that liberalism and Jacobinism, in a very great number of their principles, are not only romantic but can also be traced in the history of thought to the influence of the romantic mentality and art which we have just examined. It is by the unreality, the ultimate impracticability, of the fundamental principles of liberalism and Jacobinism that we know them—by their overstrained sentiment, their false

psychology, and above all by their ignorance of the eternal laws which, as long as humanity lasts, are likely to govern human relationships. (*A Defence of Conservatism,* pp. 49–55)

The true conservative must be above all a realist in thought and action. And it must be admitted that in his best examples he has been true to type. Following the classic and realistic tradition, he believes in the natural hierarchy of life, that order of rank which is of nature's making and which cannot be squared with any unreal notions about human equality. Thus, he is a supporter of order, subordination, authority and discipline. He believes in time and its relation to quality, and vice versa. He does not build on the romantic idea that greatness of any sort is accidental or independent of causation. He organises society on lines in which time and quality can work their reciprocal effect, both in human beings and in things. He very naturally inclines to a belief in good lineage, heredity and in sound and pure stock for the production of anything valuable, and has an instinctive aversion to popular control because he cannot believe that everybody is endowed with the necessary judgement or taste to be able to decide what is his best interest. (*A Defence of Conservatism,* pp. 55–6)

Machiavelli, who was probably the greatest political thinker Europe has ever seen, accused the French of not understanding statecraft because they allowed the Church to reach such greatness in their nation.

Certainly, the lesson of the Middle Ages was to the effect that Church and state were only too frequently in conflict, and unless a European monarch had either come to an agreement with Rome, or had, like the aristocratic rulers of Venice, wisely insisted on controlling ecclesiastical affairs in his own state, his authority was never secure. At any moment, the Church as the spiritual and moral guide of Christendom might intervene and champion the cause either of his subjects or of his enemies against him, and entirely paralyse his government. Thus, to many writers, among whom is Palgrave, the Church is believed to have been 'the corner-stone' even of English liberty by the support which it gave to the people, probably only in its own interest, against the power of the ruling authorities. A recent writer, the Rt Hon. J.M. Robertson, speaks of the Church as representing 'a special source of strife' because it is 'a state within the State', and when we remember that the Christian religion, unlike the Jewish, the Greek, the Egyptian and the Roman, is an international or Catholic religion, aiming at universality and calling itself universal, we have to recognize in its presence

in the nation not only a state within the state, but in some respects a foreign state within the state. In Christian Europe, therefore, temporal interests were sharply differentiated from religious interests from the beginning. That splendid social integration, which in Israel, Egypt, Greece and Rome made attachment to the state at once attachment to the religion identified with the state, and which therefore made for unity and single-mindedness in patriotic endeavour, was never properly speaking the heritage of any European people after the conversion of Europe to Christianity, and this has naturally had many unhappy consequences.

It may seem absurd and pathetically feeble, according to our modern notions, that the Jews and the Egyptians should in their conflicts have appealed to their respective deities for help and succour. But we should remember that the spectacle of the Germans and the English, each claiming that the same God was on their particular side in the Great War, would have seemed equally ridiculous and feeble to the ancient Jews and Egyptians. From the standpoint of nationality, therefore, Christianity, like high finance, is a disturbing force because it is an international force. And the only way, on the temporal side, to deal satisfactorily with it and the Church which organised it was either to master its local representatives, as the Venetians did, or else to establish a private national branch of it, as Henry VIII did. (*A Defence of Conservatism,* pp. 168–9)

Since the publication of Machiavelli's *Prince,* opinion in Europe has been hopelessly divided upon one important point in connection with politics. This point is the relation of political to private morality.

Machiavelli says definitely that political and private morality are different things. He tells the ruler outright that 'he need never hesitate to incur the reproach of those vices, without which his authority can hardly be preserved', and that in certain circumstances a lie, an act of cruelty, of fraud, of deliberate subterfuge, of breach of faith, is often necessary and statesmanlike—nay, that it is often the only powerful weapon a ruler is in a position to wield, and that such an act cannot and must not be judged from the standard of private morals. He says that for a prince or a statesman to act in his political capacity always according to the moral standard of his private life would often mean the absolute ruin and nemesis of the state he was ruling. He even goes so far as to say that, though it may be useful for the ruler to appear to be acting always according to the moral precepts of private life, it would frequently be to his injury to do so.

Against this view we find a curious and motley throng, and for it three of the wisest men the world has ever seen.

First among the opponents of Machiavelli are the Jesuits. This is strange, especially when one remembers their doctrine of the end justifying the means. Their opposition to Machiavelli, however, is perhaps best understood and esteemed at its proper worth when we realize their position. The Jesuits, admirable and profound as they are in their organization, would have been the first to see that the sanction of super-morality in the state would be tantamount to endowing the secular body with powers with which they would find it difficult if not impossible to cope. In their struggle against all states on behalf of the Church, with the view of subjecting the former to the latter, it is comprehensible enough that they could ill abide the independence which Machiavelli claimed and recommended. We cannot therefore help but take their objections to the great Florentine secretary *cum grano salis*.

Again, in the case of the Huguenots fighting against the Crown of France, we are justified in suspecting motives which must have been far from purely moral. Their opposition to the Machiavellian doctrine was, to say the least, an interested one. If Machiavelli lent strength to their enemies, this was reason enough for condemning him.

Professor Villari mentions Giovanni Bodino, the author of the work *De republica,* and Tommaso Campanella, a philosopher and Dominican friar, as being also opposed to Machiavelli in doctrine, but by far the most interesting of the group of anti-Machiavellians are surely Frederick the Great of Prussia and Metternich.

The former, who, throughout his reign at least, acted as one of the most devoted followers of Machiavelli, actually wrote a book, *Réfutation du Prince de Machiavel,* in which he attacked the doctrines of *The Prince* one by one with great vigour. How is this to be explained? As in the case of Metternich, this opposition can be understood only as an example, all too common in countries like Germany and England, of the manner in which practice and theory often conflict in the life of one man. The clear logical intellect of the Southerner is not often guilty of such muddleheadedness, but the Northerner is frequently able to express the most sincere hatred of a principle in the abstract, though he pursues it with the utmost energy and resolution in his everyday life.

Thus Frederick the Great, despite his sudden and unwarrantable attack on Maria Theresa, his conquest of Silesia and his treaties of alliance so often broken without qualm or scruple, is able to work himself up into a fit of righteous indignation over the man who gives rulers the formulae of these sometimes necessary state crimes …

And now, who are the people on the other side—the people who were lucid enough to realize that political and private morality are two different things, and who were honest enough to face the fact without any canting circumlocution?

Among the earlier monarchs who are of this group we may mention Charles V of Germany, Henry III and Henry IV of France, and Queen Christina of Sweden. But among the men who really count, among the spirits who rise to the pinnacles of human greatness, we find Lord Bacon of Verulam, Richelieu and Napoleon, all of whom believed and defended Machiavelli's doctrine.

This should be sufficient for us. To all who believe not in metaphysical discussion or the mere bandying of words, but in men, it ought to be enough that Napoleon and Richelieu held the view that Machiavelli upholds in *The Prince*—the view that political deeds are not bound by any morality which governs private conduct. But, in truth, to all such people who are profound enough to make men and not disquisitions the measure of their choice in doctrine, Machiavelli's contention will seem the merest platitude. For what, at bottom, does it really mean? It means simply, in reference to internal politics, that the morals for the child cannot constrain or trammel the parent, and, in reference to external politics, that the morals which rule the conduct of each individual member of the herd to his neighbour cannot constrain or trammel the leader of the herd in his position of defender or assailant facing a hostile or strange herd. (*A Defence of Aristocracy*, pp. 282–5)

Aristocracy

All the world over, where flourishing and powerful societies have been formed and maintained, the notion of the gentleman has appeared in some form of other as a national ideal. Nobody reading Confucius, for instance, or the *Li Chi,* which is the Chinese Book of Ceremonies, can doubt for one instant that the idea of the gentleman was and still is a very definite thing in China, nor could such a reader doubt that the Chinese gentleman, even of two thousand years ago, would have been perfectly able to understand

every movement and every scruple of his fellow in rank in England of the twentieth century.

There was also the gentleman of ancient Egypt, the gentleman of Athens and the gentleman of Rome.

All huge and powerful administrations have to rely very largely upon the trust which they can place in a number of high responsible officials who, in moments of great temptation or great trial, will stand honestly and bravely at their posts. All stable family life, too, depends on the existence of a number of such men who need not necessarily be state servants but who, engaged in other walks of life, reveal a similar reliability.

The very existence of a large administration, or of a large nation of citizens, is impossible without such men. And all societies which have started out with the idea of lasting, growing and standing upright have always instinctively developed the high ideal of the gentleman—the man who can be trusted at all times and all places, the man who is sincere, the man who is staunch and constant in matters of principle, the man who never sacrifices the greater to the less, and the man who is sufficiently self-reliant to be able to consider others …

But how do you suppose the virtues of the gentleman are reared? For you are too wise to believe that copybook precepts can do any good, save as a mere confirmation of a deep bodily impulse. You are surely too experienced to suppose that the leopard can change his spots or that a Negro can beget a white child. Then how do you suppose a strong virtue—a virtue which, like a powerful iron girder, nothing human can snap—is cultivated and produced in a family, in a line of human beings, even in an animal?

On this question Aristotle spoke words of the deepest wisdom. He declared that all virtue was habit, habituation, custom. ‘The virtues’, he says, ‘we get by first performing single acts … by doing just actions, we come to be just; by doing the actions of self-mastery, we come to be perfected in self-mastery; and by doing brave actions, brave’.

And then he proceeds: ‘And to the truth of this, testimony is borne by what takes place in communities; because the law-givers make the individual members good men by habituation, and this is the intention certainly of every law-giver, and all who do it not fail of their intent; but herein consists the difference between a good constitution and a bad’.

A gentleman in body and soul, then, is a creature whose very tissues are habituated to act in an honourable way. For many generations, then, his people must have acted in an honourable way. In order that the first and strongest impulse in his body may be an honourable impulse, such impulses must constantly have been favoured at the cost of other impulses, until the voice of the others is weak and the roar of the honourable impulse fills his being with a noise that drowns all other voices. (*A Defence of Aristocracy,* pp. 273–6)

Aristocracy means essentially power of the best—power of the best for good, because the true aristocrat can achieve permanence for his order and his inferiors only by being a power for good.

But power is not a possession which, once it is established, can last for ever without nurture or repair. On the contrary, to endure it must constantly be vigilant, constantly on the alert, continually seeking out its like in the nation and drawing it into its own body. To give aristocratic power even relative permanence, therefore, it must be so organized as to be able to draw all the national manifestations of its like into its own body. Wherever men of profound ideas, men of thought, men of taste, men of good quality in the matter of living and appearance are to be found, there the vigilant eye of a powerful aristocracy should seek them out and recognize in them the spawn, the reserve, the only refreshment of its strength. From their whole number but the very smallest proportion might ultimately be taken; at least, however, they would constitute the best aspirants for the position of the best that could be found. The mere fact that so many essentially great rulers, such as Pericles, Caesar, Charles I, Napoleon, have shown fastidious taste in the very minutest concerns of daily life, and that so many artists, such as Diognetus, Lamachus, Leonardo da Vinci, Rubens, have shown ruler qualities of no small order, ought to have been sufficient to put mankind on the right scent here and to prevent mere material success from being the sole criterion of excellence.

For in the end it is taste, it is proper ideas, it is healthy standpoints that conquer and prevail. And if men of taste, of proper ideas and of healthy standpoints are constantly overlooked, the power that overlooks them must decline and must ultimately fall a victim to all powerful hostile elements, however bad and tasteless these may be.

[W]alk through Arundel Castle or Goodwood on any afternoon in the summer; notice the pictures on the walls, especially when they are modern pictures—for these alone reveal the actual taste of the owner; notice the ornaments and the decorations, the books and the magazines, and then ask yourself whether the Duke of Norfolk or the Duke of Richmond and Gordon has that vigilant and discerning eye which can discover and appropriate aristocratic quality wherever it is to be found down below in the unenobled strata of the nation.

Of course, neither of them has it. Neither of them has a notion of what taste actually means and how unlimited is the extent of its range.

And, being devoid of taste themselves, they are naturally unable even to supply the lack of this quality in their household by a careful selection made outside it. And they are, therefore, powerless.

Apart from their property, they are powerless. Devoid of taste, judgement and ideas, they have no other weapon than their wealth. But this weapon alone is naturally utterly inadequate today, for all capitalists can wield it with equal force, and perhaps with less scrupulosity than these noble gentlemen. (*A Defence of Aristocracy*, pp. 415–17)

‘The cat is a wonderful animal’, Melhado pursued. ‘It has all the qualities of the ideal aristocrat, save one: it is unfit for a social community. Otherwise it is noble, beautiful in every one of its movements, self-reliant, brave to the point of heroism, voluptuous, or, if you prefer it, a lover of love—for are not these kittens creatures far too beautiful to be anything but love children?—and, above all, it has no oppressing and depressing conscience. It does what it likes and only likes what it does. It has nothing of the lackey in its constitution. You could not tie a cat up like a waiting flunkey at the door of Harrod’s or the Stores: it is too self-willed, too jealous of its own dignity’. (*Mansel Fellowes*, pp. 239–40)

On the very eve of Louis XVI’s execution, Thomas Paine was arguing that ‘an hereditary governor is as inconsistent as an hereditary author. I know not whether Homer or Euclid had sons; but I will venture an opinion that if they had, and left their work unfinished, those sons could not have completed them’ …

This sounded so seductively self-evident to his generation that people had to apologize for questioning it. For what did Paine and his contemporaries know or want to know about families and family lines that

belied his glib generalization? Yet even today, two centuries after Paine displayed his deplorable ignorance and the popularization of science has made the findings of expert geneticists accessible to the public, we still hear doubts expressed about hereditary influences. And the same gullible people, who will spare no pains or money to obtain a dog with a faultless pedigree, will meekly bow to the mendacious ruling of UNESCO concerning the insignificance of race and sound lineage in mankind. (*The Specious Origins of Liberalism*, p. 91)

There is no such thing as a conservative or quality-loving class. Neither is there any stratiform division of opinion between the creeds represented by conservatism and aristocracy, and other creeds. Since both aristocratic and conservative doctrine overlap in their exaltation of stability and authority, and in their common principle of regarding the need of qualitative values, they find their best adherents in every sphere of society—i.e., wherever the type occurs which instinctively measures the worth of a thing and a person according to their quality, and who appreciates the power of time in the production of anything precious.

The artisan who is conscientious at his work, and who devotes as much time as possible to acquiring proficiency at it; the artist who in his criticism is severest towards himself, and who is never satisfied that he has completed his apprenticeship; the man of noble birth who knows how to surround himself not only with truly noble people but with truly noble things—people and things, that is to say, who bear the unmistakable hallmark of quality: such people are either actual or potential aristocrats, and nothing can rob them of this title. On the other hand, the duke who has no sense of and no antennae for quality, who overlooks in himself and others a lack of the virtue and capacity which originally raised his class to its position of privilege, who does not know how to surround himself either with things or with people of quality, and who knows nothing of the necessity of time in the production of precious things, is, like the unconscientious artisan and the uncritical and self-complacent artist, a plebeian and ruffian by nature, whom nothing can elevate to the class of the born conservative or aristocrat.

The violence that has been done to truth by attempting to fit social classes compactly into political parties is probably the primary cause of the confusion now existing in the public mind regarding domestic policies in this country. And that is why it cannot be repeated too often that the

conservative and man of qualitative judgement—I do not mean the aristocratic ruler—is an example of a very definite mind and body which occurs in all classes, and is by no means necessarily more common in the present House of Lords than in a coal-pit. (*A Defence of Conservatism*, pp. 38–9)

Leadership

From the dawn of social life men have recognized that communal existence is permanently in need of regulation and that, if it is not to be disruptive of good order, human behaviour cannot be left to the uncontrolled direction of natural passion and instinct.

The native iniquity of man—his cupidity, aggressiveness, sadistic impulses and lust—inevitably taught all human groups that social survival was feasible only if some curb was placed on many of mankind's natural characteristics. This was always a pressing necessity. But today, when, added to man's natural iniquity, the general state of civilized mankind—their prevalent sickness, both mental and physical—has aggravated rather than diminished their evil potentialities (for even if the sick and neurotic are not intentionally malicious, their reactions and impulses cannot always be properly controlled and their taste, judgement and influence can hardly be wholesome), the need of restraint, of discipline and of a good example set by a healthy and wise elite [are] more than ever necessary.

For this reason, man's most urgent and everlasting problem must always have been, and still is, to find and establish an authority which can lend acceptable compelling power to the rules by which he governs his society. Originally, men were doubtless assisted in this quest by the natural inequality of gifts and capabilities recognizable among them, and, whenever no arbitrary imposition of rulership through conquest occurred, differences in individual endowment, in mental and physical attributes, must usually have determined the identity of rulers and ruled.

The readiness of all men in situations of emergency or simple need to defer to their superiors in strength, whether of body or mind, and willingly to profit from a fellow-man's greater resourcefulness, perspicacity, inventiveness, mere dexterity, observational powers or whatnot, must inevitably have induced most societies, however primitive and even against the will of the least discriminating, to acknowledge and raise to authority

those among their members whom it was to the general advantage to follow and obey.

To this day, one has only to live long enough in any close community like a hamlet or village in order to discover how impossible it is to conceal under a bushel any light one may be able to emit. Neighbours will soon become aware of it and in due course importune one with their wish to turn it to their own account. And when this occurs, they will display a surprising amount of humility and subservience in accepting advice and even commands which, in the ordinary way, they would have regarded as overbearing. (*The Specious Origins of Liberalism*, pp. 9–10)

[An] opponent may ask, 'Who instals these men of taste in power? Who "elects" them to their position of trust and influence?'

Looking back upon history, I find that no such act of installation or election ever actually takes place, save as a surface movement. What really happens, what has always happened save in degenerate times, is that those among humanity who were examples of flourishing life have always asserted and established their superior claims themselves. And in communities in which the proper values prevail concerning greatness, nobility, taste, beauty, power, sagacity and health they find themselves as naturally raised to power by their own efforts as a frog rises to the water's surface by the movements of its agile limbs.

True, it is difficult to point to a great religion or to a great nation that has originated from the single-handed efforts of one man, but what usually occurs is this: that, just as one fool makes many, so does one maximum of life prove a lodestone to all his equals and his approximations. Thus, while we find that a galaxy of men of power seem quite spontaneously to have clustered round the founder of the Christian religion, we also see a group of the most able warriors spring as if by magic round the person of the great Napoleon. (*A Defence of Aristocracy*, pp. 259–60)

The whole discussion about free will and determinism could only have arisen in a weak and sickly age, for as a matter of fact they both stand for precisely the same thing and, as ideas, arise from a similar state of decadence and disease.

To the strong there is no such thing as free will, for free will implies an alternative and the strong man has no alternative. His ruling instinct leaves him no alternative, allows him no hesitation or vacillation. Strength of will

is the absence of free will. If to the weak man strong will appears to have an alternative, it is a total misapprehension on his part.

To the strong there is also no such thing as determinism as the determinists understand it. Environment and circumambient conditions determine nothing in the man of strong will. To him the only thing that counts, the only thing he hears, is his inner voice, the voice of his ruling instinct. The most environment can do is to provide this ruling instinct with an anvil on which to beat out its owner's destiny, and beneath the racket and din of its titanic action all the voices of stimuli from outside, all the determining suggestions and hints from environment, sink into an insignificant and inaudible whisper, not even heard, much less heeded, therefore, by the strong man. That is why the passion of a strong man may be permanent; that is why the actions of a strong man may be consistent: because they depend upon an inner constitution of things which cannot change, and not upon environment which can and does change. If the strong man is acquainted with determinism at all, it is a determinism *from within*, a voice from his own breast, but this is not the determinism of the determinists.[10]

Who, then, has free will—or appears to have it? Obviously the man who, to himself, even more than to others, seems to have an alternative. His inner voice, the voice of his ruling instinct, even if he has one, is so weak, so small in volume, so low in tone that all the voices from his surroundings dare to measure themselves against it. His mind's ear, far from being deafened by the sound of his own inner voice, is able to listen with respectful and interested attention to the stimuli from outside; it is able to draw comparisons between the volume of sound within and without, and to itself it seems able even to elect to follow the more persuasive and alluring sound. From this apparent ability which the weak man has of electing one voice or the other—the one in his heart or the one outside—he gets to believe that he has free will, but as his inner voice is generally far weaker than that coming to him from his environment, the determinists are perfectly right in telling him that *he* has not decided the course of his action. That is why the passion of a weak man, if he appear to have any, is never permanent; that is why the actions of a weak man are never consistent—because they depend upon environmental stimuli which change, and not upon an inner constitution of things which does not change.

Determinism *from without,* then, is characteristic of the weak man's action. But because he is not abashed at the voice from outside daring to measure itself against his inner voice, he imagines he exercises what he calls free will—the solace and the illusion of the degenerate. (*A Defence of Aristocracy*, pp. 313–15)

When I use the expression 'a type of man animated by the Promethean spirit', I should like to remind the reader that I mean a people rather like the Americans, the modern Germans and ourselves, who, with the minds of boy scouts, enjoy speed for speed's sake, revel in mechanical contrivances of all kinds, retain until a very late age a keen interest in any device that complicates existence, and whose chief concern and joy in life is to press every possible discovery, chemical or mechanical, to its furthest possible development, without a thought of the consequences—that is to say, regardless of the misery, ill-health, ugliness or degeneration that they may be creating. It is a type that has no art of life, that cannot construct in life; it can construct only bridges, towers, engines, canals, material things and romances. In life it is only destructive and anarchical, loathing order as much as a schoolboy does, and ignoring culture. Like the boy scout, it does not understand women and is usually mastered by them. It is sentimental, very stupid, except in regard to mechanical and chemical questions, and always absolutely certain that the pursuits wherein it finds its pleasure are the only pursuits worth anything. The men of this type make good policemen, the women good charwomen; in fact, these two characters will probably survive as striking examples of the type long after all the engineers and the chemists have been forgotten.

There is another type, however—though, unfortunately for mankind, its influence seems to make itself felt but very slightly in modern Western civilization. It is a type of more benevolent, more wise and more adult thought. It is a type that produces men who develop beyond the boy-scout stage in taste and interests. It is a hypermetropic type that has the capacity of looking ahead and measuring the consequences of trifling mechanical innovations against the greater object, which is the happiness of mankind. It has little interest in complicating life for complexity's sake. Where human life does not seem to be promised any desirable advantage by a new mechanical toy, it discards that toy. It refuses to sacrifice one healthy child to the most magnificent invention that has ever been devised. It has no respect for the engineer or the chemist. It regards them as unscrupulous

schoolboys who must be kept in check, and who have the class of mind which never grows up and delights until the end of its days in tying a tin kettle to a cat's tail. It regards the civilization created by the engineer and the chemist as precisely humanity with a heavy iron boiler tied to its ankles. It sees no object in existence unless life is beautiful, healthy, vigorous and joyful. It values simplicity more than anything; in fact, it is the identification mark of all those who belong to this type that they can flourish and develop their highest faculties in simple surroundings and with the gratification of simple tastes. It practises an art of life, which as a rule it sets higher than artistic production, but once the art of life is mastered it turns its attention to the productive arts and then creates the most beautiful masterpieces. (*Man's Descent from the Gods*, pp. 177–9)

Capitalism

It is not only the Londoner or the inhabitant of a large provincial

city who measures England's greatness by the square-mileage of her colonies and the huge figures of her imports and exports: every Englishman does this, whether he be a scholar, a painter, a doctor, a lawyer, a grocer or a farmer …

It is much more natural to healthy mankind to admire beauty, greatness of character, strength of will, spirit and body. It is much more natural to healthy and spirited mankind to admire health, grace, prowess and skill.

The peasants who fought and won Crécy, Poitiers and Agincourt would have been completely at a loss to understand what you meant had you told them that England was great because she could count her trade returns in so many hundreds of millions, and because the sun never set on her Empire. They would have felt that while such things might constitute greatness, if the ideals, the hearts, the health and the spirit of the nation were not great as well, they would mean nothing.

Today, however, we can look on our vulgar culture of automobiles and general 'smartness'; we can contemplate our weak-kneed, lantern-jawed, pale-faced clerks and typists; we can inspect the ugliness of our huge cities, our slums, our hospitals, our factories and our lunatic asylums, and still say that England is great. Why is England great under these circumstances? 'Because', says the glib modern man, 'she is the market of the world, the counting-house of Europe, the workshop of five continents, the wealthiest nation on earth'. (*A Defence of Aristocracy*, pp. 167–9)

The question to be decided was not only whether it was good to transform England from a land of agriculture and of homecrafts into a capitalistic, commercial and factory-ridden country, but it was also necessary to discover a method whereby the people could be reconciled to the change most satisfactorily and thoroughly …

It was a matter of making trade, commercialism, factories, capitalism and general shopkeeping, as we now know them, paramount and triumphant. To effect this change, however, it was essential that legions among the population of the British Isles should be depressed, reduced in body and spirit, rendered pusillanimous, weak, servile, anemic, asexual and in fact sick. It was necessary to have a vast army of willing slaves who would not be merely satisfied and content, not merely pleased and happy, but who would actually reach the topmost wave of their being, so to speak, in balancing themselves all day long, like stylite saints, upon office stools, in turning over the leaves of their ledgers, invoice books and registers, or in manipulating the lever of a punching, a cutting, a rolling or a rocking machine …

Strictly speaking, although the modern factory does not necessarily covet sickly, ugly and spiritless creatures for its working hands, robust health, beauty and high, unbendable spirits are not at all essential to its requirements; in fact, they may very often thwart its purpose, seeing that beauty lures very strongly to preoccupations quite irrelevant to the hopeless drudgery of ministering to machinery, while high spirits and robust health are notoriously hostile to that demand for meek submission and to confined and stuffy industry which the exigencies of a factory imply. (*A Defence of Aristocracy*, pp. 171–4)

Human nature, in casting her creatures, moulds many a one who is worthy of great possessions, and also many a one who is as unfit to use power in any form beneficently as a barbarous Fuegian. And where wealth and property are uncontrolled, as they always are in countries where *laissez-faire* or something approaching to it is the economical doctrine, both are sure to acquire a bad name through the villainy of the number of those who are unfit to possess them.

To attack wealth and property in themselves—to attack capitalism, in fact—is, however, as shallow as it is specious. For these things have existed since the world began, and in their essence they are no more wrong than

superior beauty or superior vocal powers. That which has ceased to exist, though, and whose collapse was the most fatal blow ever levelled at wealth and property, is that direction, guidance and control from above, which either a king of taste, a party of tasteful aristocrats or a conclave of sages in taste are able to provide, and which prevents the edge of power from being pressed too heavily and unscrupulously by the tasteless and vulgar among the opulent against the skins of their inferiors and subordinates. (*A Defence of Aristocracy*, p. 239)

Ruralism

Sick people, and those who, as the result of some inner conflict, are never at peace with themselves, tend to romantic and fantastic speculations, because in their longing to be different and to feel different they are always wishing that everything else might be different. And thus we find, throughout history, romanticism tending to increase where circumstances conspire to produce an unhealthy population suffering from a lack of serenity.

It is not a mere accident that, traditionally, the Tories and Conservatives of England have been the denizens of rural districts (the land), and the Whigs, Liberals and radicals the denizens of towns (the boroughs). Nor is it mere chance that further connects commerce and factory industry, and therefore urban populations, with the romantic, and agriculture and rural industry with the realistic attitude of mind. These connections are as inevitable as the connection between vice and crime, and misery and opiates. (*A Defence of Conservatism*, p. 78)

Closely associated with any scheme for purging the population of its degenerate elements, and for promoting the national health, are two objects which should always take a prominent place in every conservative programme: the arrest of urbanization, and the encouragement and development of agriculture. In view of the known evils of urbanization, which have been sufficiently widely proclaimed, it is incredible that a large and inflated city like London, for instance, should be allowed to continue to spread like a cancer, north, south, east and west, swallowing up the countryside all round it, and increasing the area covered by streets of houses, gas-works, factories, etc. It is difficult, in view of what is at stake, to understand the indifference of the various governments to this twofold blight of modern England—the wanton destruction of green fields and

lanes, and the spread of the urban cankers. Is England to become one long ugly succession of streets, full of ugly, toothless people living on tinned food, tea, margarine and white bread? One is inclined to cavil less at the growth of urban centres and their present unwieldy proportions than at the absurd lack of any policy towards this question which continues to be shown by our legislature. And if the masses of this country are to be saved from disaster in the future, drastic measures will need to be taken to arrest a trend which is as ruinous to their health as it is to their minds. It is in towns that the useless, functionless pauper is bred by the thousand. It is in towns that all touch with reality is lost and that sedition flourishes. It is in large cities that modern man suffers from the worst and most maddening consequences of overpopulation. And yet this evil is allowed to increase *ad infinitum*. (*A Defence of Conservatism,* pp. 234–7)

Some days later there was a dinner party at the Lambies', at which most members of the circle were present. It was a sort of routine function that went the round of the various families composing the society of the place; it hardly occurred more than twice annually in each house, and constituted the only form of hospitality that the elite of the villages provided for one another's entertainment …

It is not impossible that a community in which such functions are regarded as the rule is in many ways the ideal social unit, conspicuously above the vast, loose, amorphous and constantly changing communities of large cities and populous towns. For, while the latter provide but little opportunity for acquiring a deep knowledge of one limited set of human beings, they inevitably foster a certain superficiality in the science of human nature, which ultimately influences everybody's outlook.

Human beings do not differ nearly as much as the grossly exaggerated impressions of a close view lead many to suppose. Consequently, to know a few people extremely well … was truly to be educated in human psychology. It amounted to possessing an amount of cultivation which in these days is rare. Perhaps this explains why people inhabiting rural and thinly populated districts are, as a rule, so much better informed in the matter of the human heart than are the members of large urban centres. (*The Goddess that Grew Up,* p. 50)

Chapter 3

LIBERALISM

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, sundry Western political leaders and political philosophers attacked the accelerating trend away from rule by aristocracy and towards democracy. But after the advent in the 1920s and 1930s of Fascism in Italy and National Socialism in Germany, few prominent figures outside these countries dared to be stigmatized as allies of dictatorship. As ever, Anthony Ludovici stood out as the courageous exception. He once observed that any professional writer could fault democracy only 'at the risk of his living', but he did take that risk.

From A Defence of Aristocracy *in 1915, via* The False Assumptions of 'Democracy' *in 1921,* The Quest of Human Quality *in 1952 to* The Specious Origins of Liberalism *in 1967, he analyzed the failings of democracy and the liberal ideology that underpins it. He demolished the liberal's trinity of liberty, equality and fraternity, proving that liberalism runs counter to what the great Western observers have established about human nature. Indeed, David Spitz's* Patterns of Anti-Democratic Thought *(New York, 2nd edition, 1965) regards Ludovici as one of the modern world's leading adversaries of democracy. But as Chapter 2 shows, Ludovici sought to offer an alternative to liberalism without advocating totalitarianism and autocracy. His voice needs to be heard more than ever, now that most of the world, and especially America, regards democracy as a religion. Indeed, although Ludovici was writing in an age before television, his analysis of the roles played by commerce and the mass media in fostering liberalism hits nail after nail on the head.*

Justice

As a matter of fact, from the standpoint of civilized human society, Nature is utterly immoral, life is hopelessly unjust. It is not only the sinful young rabbit that provides the fox with his meal. It is not only the guilty mouse that dies an agonizing death in the cat's jaws. It is not only the dissipated sparrow that is torn to fragments by the young of the sparrow-hawk. Neither is it only the vicious worm that gets rationed out piecemeal to the young of the mole. And what of the antelopes that fall victims to lions and tigers, the sheep and cattle that fall victims to man, the pheasants that fall victims to our sportsmen, the fish that fall victims to their larger fellows? Wherever we look, we see suffering, undeserved suffering—aye,

undeserved agony. The world and life are therefore essentially unmoral, they are not concerned with justice. The rain falls both on the just and on the unjust. The hurricane kills the just and the unjust alike. The lightning burns the house of the just or unjust indifferently. Microbes feed on the pure and undefiled virgin just as ravenously as upon the polluted jade. Tuberculosis does not pick and choose; it kills where it can. Virtue is no safeguard against it; neither is genius.

Wherever we look, either in the jungle or the prairie, we see the blood-red fangs and the carmine claws of the bully rampant. Fair play? Where is the fair play between the cat and the mouse? Where is the fair play between the stoat and the shrew? Where is the fair play between the wolf and the lamb? Justice? What is justice, where is justice in life and Nature? In the vegetable world, which is said to be inanimate, the fierce uneven struggle is not even mitigated by the ‘sporting chance’ of escape.

Truth to tell, the word ‘justice’, whether immanent or otherwise, is meaningless when applied to the universe. Nobody has ever dreamed of thinking out the billions and billions of post-mortem compensations which would be necessary to adjust the balance of only one year’s rapine and slaughter in the world of Nature. Nobody has ever dreamt that such a calculation would even be possible. Injustice, if it have any meaning at all in this respect, is therefore written large all over the face of life and Nature. (*The False Assumptions of ‘Democracy’*, pp. 51–2)

Ideology

… Western European political expedients were never original but always influenced by the powerful example of ancient Greece and Rome. Wherever there happened to be classical erudition, the history of these two great nations of antiquity and their political innovations were well-known, and many documents, recording the shifts to which they were reduced after their kings and nobles failed them, had not only survived but were also familiar to scholars throughout Christendom.

Thus, unfortunately for Western Europe, the problem of finding an acceptable authority for government when former rulers had been deposed was never studied by minds free from prepossessions. For the knowledge of what Greece and Rome had done gave a fatal twist to political speculation and offered the indolent minds of the age a temptingly speedy and ready-made solution of a riddle bristling with difficulties …

It never seemed to occur to them that, in thus allowing themselves to be carried away by the crude political improvisations of peoples as remote and relatively primitive as the ancient Greeks and Romans, they were arbitrarily hand-picking from a scrap-heap of miscellaneous and exploded superstitions one or two belonging to the realm of politics, which, for no satisfactory reason except haste and sterility of invention, they assumed to be less puerile than the rest.

They overlooked the fact that the political expedients they were adopting were the improvisations of the very same people who cherished and practised any number of grotesquely irrational rites and ceremonies which were hardly indicative of sound judgement, let alone wisdom. They were allowing themselves to be impressed by the political forms of two peoples who believed implicitly in genethliogy (the influence of the planets on human destiny and on the aetiology of disease), in haruspication (the art of foretelling events by examining animal entrails), and above all in hepatoscopy (divination by means of scrutinizing the livers of the sacrificial animals) …

Nor were these the only forms of occult prevision and divination, at least among the ancient Greeks, for a plundered and baffled householder of Hellenic times would think nothing of dashing up to the Oracle of Dodona and asking it to reveal the whereabouts of the few cushions stolen from his house the day before.

If, moreover, we turn from primitive superstitions such as these to consider the philosophical ideas for which the ancient Greeks and Romans were responsible, it is difficult to deny that many of the most disastrous mistakes of Western civilization are to be ascribed to the conclusions which these two ancient peoples bequeathed to us concerning the nature of man and the universe …

Confidently, however, as modern Europeans accepted many of these unsound Graeco-Roman philosophical ideas, their gullibility reached its apogee when they appropriated lock, stock and barrel the shoddy political improvisations for which Athens and Rome became famous. (*The Specious Origins of Liberalism,* pp. 16–17)

It is part of the superstition and shortsightedness of liberalism to suppose that a continual stream of new laws and an incessant remodelling or demolition of institutions can restore a nation’s health and happiness. It is,

moreover, a sign of the shallowness of liberalism that it has always cherished the romantic hope that the identity and character of a people survive without any effort on the part of its leaders and custodians to maintain sound values.

Thus, liberalism has always looked on quite unmoved at all changes, of no matter what source or kind, and superficially embraced them as progress. It has never paused to differentiate between those changes which will develop and those which will mar the character of a nation.

In all countries, therefore, liberalism has meant:

(1) The uncritical misunderstanding of all change as progress.

(2) The extension of the utmost freedom to all, in the sense of influencing, whether for good or evil, the destiny of the nation. Liberalism overlooked the elementary fact that, since only the fewest in any generation can be above existing conditions, it is only the fewest whose free influence on existing conditions can elevate them. The majority, particularly all those below parity in sanity, health and vigour, can, by freely exercising their influence on existing conditions, merely debase them. Thus, freedom in the liberal sense must mean the gradual deterioration of the national standards and traditions because only a handful in every generation can bring about change which is elevating.

(3) The acceptance of a jungle morality which is implicit in the individualism of the liberal position. Give the millions freedom to influence the nation's destiny and you must expect individuals to see advantage in a change which is advantageous only to themselves and their like. Their private interests will take precedence of national interests. Thus, a sort of *sauve qui peut*[11] social philosophy arises, in which each is for himself and the devil is left to take the hindermost. And since the majority cannot be expected to see beyond the horizon of their own profit, there arises a *bellum omnium contra omnes* which is a jungle morality, under the sway of which the nation perishes.

(4) The acceptance of two principles—independence and separateness—assuming the possibility of private rights in property and in judgement within a community which, by virtue of its gregariousness, relied on the very opposite principles for its survival.

The consequence of these four elementary characteristics of liberalism [has] everywhere been the disintegration, decay and degeneration of the

societies in which they have prevailed. (*English Liberalism,* pp. 4–5)

Democracy

[T]he only possible reason for accepting a majority's ruling when that majority consists of a heterogeneous epicene crowd, not qualified to form authoritative judgements on any matter whatsoever, is that, if it chose to compel acceptance of its opinion, it could do so by sheer force …

The acceptance and support of majority rule by liberals can, therefore, only be due either to their imbecility, which prevents them from recognising the odious principle on which it rests, or else to their perfidy, which enables them to condemn the practical application of this principle by others whilst claiming the right to apply it themselves. For they were always the first indignantly to denounce a German Kaiser or an Italian or Teutonic dictator who dared to act as if might really were right.

Besides, it is notorious that everywhere on earth the wise, intelligent and discriminating members of the community always constitute the minority. So that majority rule must in any case mean government by the least able and least gifted elements in our population. Can we wonder, then, that wherever today democracy is established things go from bad to worse, and that chaos and anarchy are becoming universal? (*The Specious Origins of Liberalism,* pp. 26–7)

The Teutonic and Anglo-Saxon races have little of the seer in their constitution. They are better at meeting and enduring disaster than at foreseeing and forestalling it. They are suspicious of prophets and prophecy because they have none of the gifts that would enable them to indulge in vaticinations themselves. Not being possessed of any capacity for divining the ultimate bourne of current tendencies, they doubt very much whether it is possible for any man to foretell that bourne or to describe it in anticipation. They are completely wedded to the doctrine of experience. 'What you have not experienced you cannot possibly know'—this is the ultimate epistemological doctrine of these two races. The consequence of this is that they are constantly in the precarious position of him who, knowing nothing of poisons and being quite unable to predict their possible effect, has to wait for the consequence of having partaken of strange drugs before he can know whether they are good for him or not.

Such an attitude would be excusable at the dawn of history, at the beginning of human life or in the Garden of Eden. It seems quite

inexcusable in the present age. And yet, although the Anglo-Saxon and Teutonic races have the whole of the accumulated history of civilized mankind and the whole of the tradition of humanity at their command, they still persist in demanding individual experience of everything before they will pronounce upon it.

The fact that in such circumstances one may quite easily die of experience, or at least fall into a hopeless decline as the result of it, never seems to occur to them. They go blundering on, refusing to learn from the lessons of previous civilizations and determined to allow every possible experience of mankind to work its worst consequences upon them, as if these consequences had never been heard of in the world before.

It is so with democracy and it will be so with ochlocracy. These things have been tried before. They are known and have proved fatal to the civilization that tried them. But what is that to the Teuton and Anglo-Saxon? He has no personal experience of their evils and is therefore determined to stake the fate of his civilization on trying them.

Even without actual experience of their evils, either in the present or the past, it would be simple for anyone, equipped with only a little insight and wisdom, to foresee exactly whither democracy will lead, whither it must lead, whither it cannot help leading, for you cannot conduct any institution with a committee consisting of everybody, without condemning that institution to immediate or ultimate disaster. Democracy has only to be thought about for a few hours in order to be dismissed as the most stupid of all forms of government. Even if other civilizations had failed to try it, even if democracy were a hitherto unexplored field, a moment’s reflection would be sufficient to enable one to condemn it as utterly hopeless.

Such, however, is the constitution of the Teutonic and Anglo-Saxon mind that the people of these races will require to see their civilization in ruins about them, as the result of their experiment with democracy, before they will be prepared to alter their opinion on the subject of democratic institutions and agree to label them ‘Poison’ for all time. (*Woman: A Vindication*, pp. 361–2)

Mr Chesterton says somewhere … that the oligarchic does not need the same manly hardness as the democratic state, and I believe he gives as his reason that democracy presupposes the ‘desire to be master’ in each

individual, whereas oligarchy grants this master's spirit only to the few and the select.

It seems never to have occurred to Mr Chesterton that in democracy no real struggle for mastership ever takes place at all—that under it there is much less of a desire to rule than a desire to further his own pretty personal interests—in the individual. Once these have been reasonably furthered, what is the experience of most legislators? The interest of the private individual in legislation suddenly wanes and, very quickly, vanishes completely away. Spencer … confesses that he must, however reluctantly, admit this to be so, and his refusal to sit for Parliament was based to a large extent on considerations of this nature.

No, what the units of a herd most earnestly seek and find is smug ease, not necessarily mastership. For mastership entails responsibility, insight, nerve, courage and hardiness towards one's self, that control of one's self which all good commanders must have and which is the very antithesis of the gregarious man's attitude of comparative indulgence towards himself. (*Who is to be Master of the World?*, pp. 170–1)

The romanticism of the ideology of Western civilization can be seen in no feature of modern life more plainly than in the manner in which modern man approaches the problems of his age. The simple, the obvious, the elementary solution, the solution nearest to hand, is never the first to be tried; frequently, it is not even selected. Western society believes in machinery in every form; it therefore approaches even its problems mechanically—that is to say, with instruments which, far from being primitive or human, are frequently so thoroughly unfitted to deal with the social wants and ailments of the time, all essentially primitive and human in their nature, that they actually aggravate and complicate these ailments and wants.

Much of this superficiality in statesmanship is due, of course, not so much to the prodigious romanticism of the age as to the mediocrity of those whom democratic representation and parliamentary methods bring to the fore. A majority must consist of mediocre people, and mediocre people cannot exercise judgement except in a mediocre way. The person selected by mediocrities to represent them must therefore be a man capable of appealing to such people—that is to say, a creature entirely devoid of genius either for ruling or for any other function. As a matter of fact, all he need

possess is a third-rate actor's gift for haranguing his electors about matters they can easily grasp, in language calculated to stimulate their emotions, and he must be guaranteed to hold or to express no original or exceptionally intelligent views. (*The False Assumptions of 'Democracy',* pp. 183–4)

[T]he difficult art of judging character belongs essentially to a mature mind. And yet English witnesses, as far distant from each other as de Quincey and Lady Violet Bonham Carter, testify to the immaturity of the majority of Englishmen …

Besides, the consistency with which ordinary people insist on testimonials before employing even a housemaid sufficiently demonstrates their awareness of their inadequate powers of judgement. But is it easier and less important to choose an MP than a domestic servant? (*The Quest of Human Quality,* p. 20)

Liberty

'Liberty consists', said John Stuart Mill over one hundred years ago, 'in doing whatever one wishes only so long as we do not attempt to deprive others of theirs, or impede their efforts to obtain it' …

This sounds eminently sensible and just. But, little as a hasty reader of the passage may suspect, it contains a fallacy. For it is not necessary to 'attempt to deprive others of theirs' in order indirectly to do so. In other words, the liberty to do 'whatever one wishes' may in countless ways 'impede' the efforts of others to obtain it without one's wishing to be in the least deliberately obstructive or obtrusive. To state an extreme case, no-one today can choose to make life on earth a hell for himself without creating, however unintentionally, an inferno for his neighbours.

Even if, as Bentham frivolously supposed, 'there is no-one knows what is for your interest as well as yourself' … Mill's proviso would still be wanting. But we know that Bentham was talking nonsense. Thirty minutes spent in any street, park or public place in England amply suffices to convince anyone of that …

It is surely obvious that there are any number of ways by which we can and do deprive others of their liberty and impede their efforts to obtain it, without our ever consciously or deliberately attempting to do so.

Take, for instance, the present widespread and insensate practice of pandering to the unbridled self-indulgence of children by gorging them incessantly with sweetstuffs of all kinds … Can anyone be so simple-

minded as to suppose that this freedom to ruin children's teeth, although by no means constituting a deliberate attempt on the part of stupid parents to curtail other people's freedom, nevertheless does not fail to do so? How about the school and other dental services? Would the annual bill of hundreds of millions paid to meet the cost of the nation's widespread morbidity not be reduced if the dental services alone were less heavy? And is not every taxpayer's freedom therefore inadvertently impeded and curtailed by this one exercise of freedom by stupid parents? Who pays for the extraction every year of the four tons of teeth drawn from children's jaws? …

No purpose can be served by adducing further examples of the indirect and inadvertent form, under a democracy, of 'impeding' other people's efforts to be free. The reader will be able to think of countless imbecilities on the part of the multitude today which effectually limit his own enjoyment of freedom, the most scandalous of which is, of course, the parliamentary vote itself, whereby any majority in the land may tyrannize over their neighbours and extort contributions from them, all of which amount to gross violations of their liberty.

Thus we have seen that two of the most cherished principles of liberalism have no foundation whatsoever. (*The Specious Origins of Liberalism*, pp. 83–6)

However desirable liberty may be, it has obvious limitations. No form of government can allow one man's liberty to interfere with his neighbour's. In a democracy like England even this rule is often ignored, but the question is: how far should everybody be allowed to say, think and do as he likes? As regards free speech in England, although when he does say what he likes, the average man's wisdom and experience make it unlikely that he will say anything original or helpful, if he says anything merely unpopular or distasteful to the organized forces behind publicity, he is as quickly switched off as if he were in the totalitarian state.

As to thinking what he likes, this, as a rule, he cannot do in any case. In all countries the atmosphere is so full of standardized ideas that the average man can hardly have a thought that is not in the air about him. The curious thing is that he feels free and original while having such thoughts. Thus the majority of us in modern England imagine ourselves perfectly free while being doomed to think that everybody has a right to his own opinion,

although all mass opinion is today borrowed. We also absorb from our atmosphere that a sense of humour must be cultivated at all costs, and that it is right to provide for the physically unsound at the expense of the sound, that congenital physical defects are no bar to love and marriage, and so on. (‘Efficiency and liberty’, p. 498)

Presumably when Rousseau spoke of ‘freedom’ he meant a certain lack of compulsion regarding actions which are peculiar to civilization, a certain absence of constraint in regard to conventions that do not harass the savage. The savage does not require to wear clean linen; he does not require to wear a hat; he may, if he choose, eat with his fingers or come to breakfast unshaven; he may have three or four wives; he may eat human flesh; he may live in the open and shoot down his prey without considering whether it belongs to the squire or to the lord of the manor. Rousseau cannot have meant anything but this by ‘freedom’. If Rousseau had been told that, while it was true that the savage does not require to perform much that the civilized man has to perform, the civilized man, on the other hand, is ‘free’ from many a duty that is incumbent on the savage, he would have perceived that to drop the constraints of civilization for those of barbarism merely amounted to exchanging one form of bondage for another. For instance, the savage has to tattoo his flesh, sometimes with great pain; he has to observe certain rigid taboos; he has to hunt for his food; he has to fight every day of his life against wild animals and the hostile tribe of his neighbourhood into the bargain; he has to work hard during boyhood and early manhood to acquire efficiency in the arts of the chase and of war; he is obliged to recognize a chieftain, etc. In fact, it could be shown that man in a ‘state of nature’ is perhaps even more constrained by conventions and laws than civilized man. (*The False Assumptions of ‘Democracy’*, pp. 22–3)

Does it not seem as if freedom and the apparent liberty to choose belong essentially to a lack of strength, to an absence of necessity in the characteristic action of man? To be able to weigh and select either one of two alternatives—say, action or inaction—implies that no overwhelming native impetus forces a man to the one and blinds him to the other. Is it possible, then, that the very cry of ‘freedom’ belongs essentially to weakness, to feebleness of character?

Let another example be taken. A young man, A, has just reached the age of one and twenty without having had a serious affair of the heart. His friends regard him as free to pursue any pastime, any sport. When once he

has discharged the duties by means of which he earns his livelihood, he is always free to join a tennis party, a cricket team, a bridge party or a debating circle. His mind can devote itself to the task of choosing what he shall do: is it to be tennis, cricket, bridge or argument? He has no overpowering inclination for anything particular; consequently, he is free to choose.

Suddenly, however, he meets a young lady, B, who strains a certain fibre in his being almost to snapping point. The tension of this strain is so powerful that, like the mainspring of a watch, it presses its host to constant activity in a certain direction. The direction in this case is B's person. Now choice falls out of the question altogether. It is no longer a matter of dwelling critically upon cricket, tennis, bridge or argument, and selecting that which seems for the moment the most alluring pastime. The tension in A's being relaxes only at one sound, at one call. It is B, B, B—B recurring. When urged by his whilom tennis companions to join him, these friends now encounter not hesitating freedom but formidable resistance, immovable decision, determined refusal. When approached by the debating society, he declares that all his spare time is now taken up. He is in fact no longer free. Something strong in him has been roused. He cannot help himself. His actions are no longer voluntary.

But who would long for freedom in such circumstances? Who longs for freedom when bondage is sweet?

It may be taken for granted, then, that strength and greatness know nothing of freedom. The strong man is not free, the great man is not free; nor for that matter, as history or the observation of our fellows can show, do they wish to be free. Only weakness is apparently free or is conscious of desiring freedom, because, having no strong native impetus to drive it willy-nilly in any given direction, it appears to be able to choose its direction. Thus only weakness can even desire freedom.

The obvious inference would be that, as fast as the mass of mankind decline in strength and greatness, the louder would become the cry for freedom. Is this conclusion valid?

It is only partially so, for there are cases when freedom is demanded not from weakness, but from strength …

Napoleon, driven by the iron necessity of his native strength, leaves Egypt to make himself master of France. But suppose that he had been

conquered and kept as a harem servant in Egypt or restrained in some other way from exerting his strength, what then? It is conceivable, in that case, that he would have longed for the freedom which would have allowed him to fall into the bondage of his own overpowering impulses to rule and to direct the destiny of France.

For the first time the idea of ‘freedom’ begins to assume a definite shape. It begins to acquire the appearance of a genuine reality.

Judging by Napoleon’s case, therefore, we may say of the desire for freedom that, although it never arises in normal conditions, it begins to make a definite appeal when it signifies a release from bondage that is incompatible and inharmonious with strong innate impulses for a bondage that is compatible and harmonious with strong innate impulses. (*The False Assumptions of ‘Democracy’*, pp. 84–6)

In its attitude to liberty, the liberal and romantic ideology is again as different as possible from the Tory and conservative attitude. As we have seen, while the Tory and conservative resist the granting of too much political liberty to the subject, because they wish to be responsible for the subject’s guidance and protection, feel that such guidance and protection will always be necessary and have no desire to shirk the responsibility they involve; and, while they wish to safeguard the individual liberty of the subject as far as possible, the Whigs and liberals, on the other hand, are always endeavouring to relieve themselves of the responsibility of guiding and protecting the masses by giving them as much apparent political power as possible, and caring not a scrap for their individual liberty. (*A Defence of Conservatism,* p. 67)

Equality

One of the most revealing facts social life teaches is that no child, adolescent or adult believes in human equality. Be they ever so benighted and ignorant, all people are inclined to recognize superiority or inferiority in their fellow-creatures in regard to qualities easily discernible. Just as one cannot conceal one’s stature, so one cannot for long make a mystery of one’s physical strength or weakness, skill or clumsiness, mental alertness or dullness, soundness of judgement or the reverse, etc. (*The Specious Origins of Liberalism,* pp. 32–3)

[A] moment’s calm reflection is enough to dispel even from the meanest intelligence the illusion that men can ever be equal.

On this score alone, then, opportunities cannot be equal, because, however accurately their equality may be established in regard to a supposed standard man, the moment they are placed in relation to the multitude of unequal men they too become unequal. For an opportunity is not a thing in itself; it only becomes something in relation to the creature who seizes it. Given an equal means of access to a particular ridge or hilltop, the opportunity to reach that hilltop or ridge is the equal means of access plus the kind of creature to whom it is afforded. The introduction of an unequal element on the one hand, the men, makes the other element, the means of access, not unequal as means of access in the abstract but unequal as opportunity in the concrete.

Suppose as much inequality between three men as exists between a hen, a hare and a hippopotamus—and as regards fleetness and swiming power, such inequality is not unusual between men—how could you devise equal opportunities which would enable all three men to reach a certain objective at the same moment of time if a strip of water, a high wall and a ravine stood between the starting point and the objective? (*The False Assumptions of ‘Democracy’*, p. 68)

What kind of person is it who clamours for this meaningless desideratum, equality? Certainly not the beautiful person, because to him equality, if it could be achieved, would result in bringing him down to the common level. Neither can it be the person specially gifted in any of the arts and sciences, for, again, equality, if it could by some miracle be wrought, would amount to wiping out the advantage of such special gifts. The self-reliant, the strong, the skilful, the able and the desirable, in all walks of life, are never stirred by this cry for equality, because they look down from their eminence and cannot therefore conceive that levelling could possibly prove an advantage.

It must therefore be the undesirable, the unskilful, the incompetent, the ugly, the ungifted, in all walks of life, the incapable of all classes, who want equality. And they want it because, looking up from their position of chafing mediocrity and ungainliness, and beholding their more gifted brethren, they realize that equality must redound to their benefit. A moment’s reflection would tell them that it is an impossible ideal; their mortified vanity, however, is stronger than their reason and urges them to believe in it, ridiculous as it may be. (*The False Assumptions of ‘Democracy’*, p. 72)

T.S. Eliot appears not to have sought the psychological basis of modern popular institutions with enough care, for, apropos of the demand for equality of opportunity, he says … ‘the disintegration of class has induced the expansion of envy, which provides ample fuel for the flame of “equal opportunity”’. But this is putting the cart before the horse. It was the gradual extension of envy, due to the spread of inferiority feelings, which led to the disintegration of class. The nonsensicality of the demand for ‘equality of opportunity’ … indeed is precisely what might be expected from a generation widely afflicted with neurosis.

Now, it cannot be too strongly emphasized that the only external signs of worthiness which, while commanding respect … place no insuperable barriers between the individual members of a society are the signs of pecuniary prestige. They can be instantly perceived by the crowd, however benighted, and they can be paraded by anyone who can obtain the infinite assortment of gadgets, ornaments, garments, etc. which advertise the ability to pay.

Hence the profound appeal of democracy to modern civilized populations. For, besides abolishing all those forms of prestige which compete with pecuniary prestige for respect and are inaccessible to common men—hereditary rank and honours, noble blood, nobility of appearance and behaviour, even peculiar hereditary gifts—democracy guarantees *la carrière ouverte aux talents*;[12] i.e., of silver.

In every democracy, pecuniary achievements consequently tend to become the most coveted and admired of all, not only because they meet every demand of vanity-cum-inferiority feelings, but also because everybody of even mediocre gifts can reasonable aspire to them.

They proclaim worthiness at sight and are not bound to any native endowments which only intimacy or prolonged intercourse brings to light. In the complicated, rushing traffic of social life they vouchsafe the casual passer-by quick and concrete evidence of their presence. Above all, owing to the snapshot speed with which pecuniary ‘worthiness’ may, without betraying its source, be immediately recognized and inspire awe, no-one dreams of asking whence it comes. If, occasionally, someone should think of asking, ‘How was this money acquired?’, he is thought to be rather cranky. Moreover, if after discovering that it was acquired none too respectably he shuns its owner, he may even be suspected of some

abnormality, and the richer the man he shuns the deeper will be the crowd's belief in his mental instability. But in the majority of cases the dramatic effect of wealth is too awe-inspiring to leave modern men the lucidity for criticism. (*The Quest of Human Quality*, pp. 42–3)

In the liberal and Jacobin ideology, the principle of the equality of mankind is axiomatic. It colours the whole mentality of their thinkers, from Locke and Rousseau to the Right Honourable J.M. Robertson, and is equally fantastic with the rest of their principles. It is taken direct from the early Christian doctrines that created romanticism; it has no basis in fact; it is contrary to nature; and it useless as a principle, except for the purpose of creating social disorder. It is often claimed that the equality is not meant in the sense of human likeness but in the sense of political right. Thus Locke further explains his notion of equality by saying it is 'the equality which all men are in, in respect of jurisdiction or dominion one over another, which was the equality I there spoke of as proper to the business in hand, being that equal right that every man hath to his natural freedom, without being subjected to the will or authority of any other man'. But this also is a myth, because the realist knows that there are some men whose natures incline them to rule and others whose natures incline them to serve, and that, when the latter do not enjoy a relation of subordination to some authority, the best that is in them is wasted and their highest usefulness is lost. Besides, in practice, even this alleged equality only in political rights never ends there. It invariably transcends the limits of the electioneering poll; and when Condorcet said 'a good law should be good for all men' (which is obvious nonsense), when Jefferson said 'all men were created equal' and when Mill claimed 'that equality of human beings which is the theory of Christianity', we see the principle of equality transcending the alleged limits of the suffrage or of political rights and becoming something basic in the nature of man.

The belief in equality naturally leads to the depreciation of authority and subordination. We saw it do so in Locke, and it does so in Mill. Hence we find the latter postulating the following fantastic proposition: 'Command and obedience are but unfortunate necessities of human life; society in equality is its normal state'. How much more wise and profound is Aristotle's statement: 'Whatever is contrary to nature is not right; therefore if there is anyone superior to the rest of the community in virtue and abilities for active life, him it is proper to follow, him it is right to obey'.

Mill would have us believe that there is something abnormal and morbid about the conditions which Aristotle describes here. It is this disbelief in authority and subordination, which, in the ideology of romanticism, liberalism and Jacobinism, always leads to the decline of discipline, for, wherever the ideology prevails, discipline ceases to be upheld. And since without discipline it is impossible to maintain standards, the belief in the myth of human equality and the disbelief in authority and subordination ultimately lead to the loss of a nation's identity. (*A Defence of Conservatism,* pp. 63–5)

Multiculturalism

Nothing on earth leads more certainly to disunion than a division of tongues. When it became necessary to disperse the iniquitous builders of the Tower of Babel, we know the expedient to which the Lord resorted and how effective it proved to be. But whereas unity is a desirable condition, and a common tongue is one of the most potent means of realising it, people not infrequently forget that a common tongue presupposes a common uniform culture. It depends upon a common view of human life and the world. This common culture provides the frame, so to speak, to the design of life, in which every word of a language fits like a piece of mosaic. Remove the frame, disturb the arrangement and the odd pieces of mosaic fall all about you and lose their significance and their necessary association. They can be used only as missiles.

Whatever weight the usual arguments against the Middle Ages may possess, at least this is plain, that in medieval times a common culture prevailed among the leading nations of Europe. Indeed, if we wished to sum up the effect of the Middle Ages in one sentence, we could not express ourselves more clearly than by saying that in those days the leaders of men attempted to convert Europe into a single nation. This effort, though only partially successful, at least led to the magnificent result that most men, of what nation soever, understood one another—understood one another in their use of abstract or general terms. For that is the test. In the end the names of things remain. The words representing common objects are usually as permanent as those objects themselves. Fashion may destroy the object and thus render the word obsolete, but for hundreds of years none will dispute the proper connotation of the words 'chair', 'table', 'basket', for instance, while in the realm of abstract and general terms such severe

fluctuations may have taken place as to make the same word mean something different to each generation.

Now, the supreme importance of abstract or general terms lies in the fact that they are the words with which we guide our lives, mark out our goals and direct our effort. It is therefore urgently necessary that they should stand for very precise ideas, and that as the current coinage of speech they should mean the same things to all men of the same group, body or nation.

As opposed to the effort of the Middle Ages, however, the effort of this age, or the Muddle Age, seems to be directed towards turning every nation into a Europe—into a unit, that is to say, without unity. And this lack of unity is nowhere more acute and more apparent than in the realm of abstract or general terms. People of the same nation nowadays no longer speak the same language. They no longer mean the same things, or convey the same ideas, when they speak of happiness, beauty, order, right, freedom, liberty, justice, etc. The frame has gone. The common culture has been replaced by a congeries of pseudo-cultures, all in active conflict. The consequence is that the all-important words of this class have fallen out of place in the design of life; they have no unifying whole in which they can find a stable position, they are at a loose end, so to speak, and they can be used, not as intelligent missives, but only as missiles between isolated groups and parties that are doomed to eternal conflict. (*The False Assumptions of 'Democracy'*, pp. 11–13)

Mass Opinion

The huge and flatulent press that has grown up within the last fifty years cares as little for accuracy of expression, or for sober precision in language, as it cares for any other ideal which formerly seemed worth striving after. The power of the press is enormous. It guides opinion, it influences the hearts of the people, it has the united effort of nations under its direction, and yet where does it show any signs of being chastened by the awful duties which, it is true, it may never deliberately have intended to shoulder at the outset of its career?

The traditions of the Middle Ages, at least, included certain principles which led to the protection of the poorer and more ignorant classes; the Church of the Middle Ages also protected the poor and the ignorant according to its lights. It may be questioned, however, whether this new force, the press, has as yet even considered the function of protecting the

ignorant as among its most sacred privileges. And by this protection there is no intention here to imply a conspiracy to withhold truth from the uncultivated or to distort facts for their digestion; what is meant is that necessary vigilance and caution which, if observed by all editors and publishers of journals and periodical literature, would induce them to regard as a public crime, as an unsocial act, the inculcation upon those who are ill-equipped for self-guidance of any notions, sentiments or points of view concerning life and human relationships that were not sound, proper or healthy, not to mention noble.

Unlike that other force, the Church, the press was ushered in with scant ceremony, almost imperceptibly. It grew to omnipotence with but a fraction of the solemnity and pomp which attended the development of the Church; hence, too, it has come to ripeness, to the zenith of its power, without any of that centralized organization, without any of that self-conscious administration of its enormous powers for good and evil, and assuredly without any of that insight into the immensely sacred responsibility of its functions, which characterized the Church from the beginning.

Now, its shrieking headlines, its catchpenny exaggerations, its hysterical falsehoods do not even savour of sanity. How, then, could it be suspected of a sense of responsibility? Sensationalism as a money-making method, ruthless and frequently thoughtless attacks on the existing order, without any guarantee of being able to supply a better order in the place of the one attacked, abuse of language as a method, as *the* journalistic technique for all occasions, and the determination not to enlighten, but to dazzle, dumbfound, scare, thrill and excite at all costs, willy-nilly, *après moi le déluge*—these are among the characteristics of the modern press and indicate the direction in which its power is tending.

To overthrow or to curb this power has again and again proved too great a task even for the most popular government. It is invincible, impregnable. The ‘freedom of the press’ may mean the freedom to abuse the credulity and the ignorance of the masses, but powerful claims are not frustrated by exact definition, however condemnatory.

There is only one way of curbing the wantonness of the press and of bringing it to a sense of the responsibility with which its power ought to have inspired it, and that is to make the masses who are its readers capable of reading it critically, capable of detecting its flagrant abuse of language

and of nailing to the counter its flame-words, its decoy-cries, its whole apparatus of sensationalism. And the only means to this end is to give to the masses a knowledge of their own language. (*The False Assumptions of ‘Democracy’*, pp. 134–6)

… Mr Danethorpe … was a kindly, successful retired businessman who, because the new age had raised him to a position of opulence, safety and power, believed blindly in its every taste and judgement.

He accordingly stoutly defended all whom the new age had acclaimed as its successes: any other attitude would have cast a slur upon his own success. Success in itself constituted the hallmark of merit. In his firmament Henry Ford and Rockefeller shone with peculiar lustre dimming all lesser or less wealthy lights, and he would as soon have thought of seeking for flaws in their character as of criticising the fare in those gilded caravansaries where flunkies lurk behind every marble pillar and princely ransoms are demanded by the staff with sphinx-like calm for the shortest sojourn.

Conversely, he could find no redeeming feature in anybody or anything that was not universally acclaimed; always had ready on the tip of his tongue torrents of adverse criticism for anything he knew to be a failure, and spontaneously produced the most plausible and rational eulogy for anything he knew to be a success. In short, he was one of those who persecutes and drives into a madhouse anyone who dares to approach his fellows as a purveyor before he has the Royal Arms blazing above his shop window.

He believed fanatically in ‘making good’. His tailors had to be a firm driven willy-nilly to carelessness, inefficiency and fraud by the overwhelming multitude of their customers. His doctor had to be a GP who, owing to the crushing pressure of his work, had long since forgotten his medicine and become merely a liaison officer between Harley Street and the luxurious mansions of his district. His books had to be books of the month or books he found lying about the drawing-rooms of his wealthy friends. As to the theatre, he was content to wait for weeks for a play that was having a long run and would remain quite incredulous if an unorthodox friend assured him that in missing *For Services Rendered*, for instance, he had failed to see one of the finest dramas of the century. How could it be so? Hadn’t it failed twice after a run of only a week or two?

Thus, in spite of vehement protestations against socialism and in favour of a wholly uncontrolled individualism, of which he imagined himself a prime product, he was one of the most humble puppets of mass-suggestion that ever held a moistened finger to the wind. (*Poet's Trumpeter,* pp. 31–2)

… I refer to the doubt that most peoples, since the invention of the printing press and the general spread of shortness of memory in which it has resulted, have been wont to cast on the reliability and accuracy of traditions that are dependent upon memory alone for their survival. Indeed, this prejudice is almost as remarkable as the conscious shortness of memory to which it owes its existence.

After a contemplation of himself and his fellows, modern man certainly cannot fail to recognize one extraordinarily pronounced feature which unites him and them in one common category. Indeed, if a brotherhood of civilized man may be believed to exist at all, it is surely this feature which constitutes its most powerful bond, and chiefly distinguishes civilized man from the horse, the elephant, the savage and the man of the past. I refer, of course, to bad memory. This is surely one of the most unmistakable signs of 'progress', for wherever 'progress' appears it is accompanied by this characteristic. Modern conditions might even be said to have reared a new and hitherto unknown type of man: *Homo sapiens sine memoria*. His politicians, his entertainers, his exploiters, his most flourishing criminals—aye, even his traitors—frequently depend for the success of their careers upon this very failing in him. His huge and flatulent press reckons and speculates upon it, for how, indeed, could the average modern European read his morning, midday and evening papers if he possessed anything remotely resembling a memory? In fact, the whole of modern life is organized on the assumption that the memory of civilized man will not survive a few hours, not to mention a few days. (*Man's Descent from the Gods*, pp. 7–8)

Chapter 4
MEN AND WOMEN

The differences between the sexes must have been Ludovici's favourite subject. He wrote six works of non-fiction dealing with such themes as sex roles, the psychological make-up of men and women, which man or woman to marry and which to avoid, and the influence—wholly deleterious, as Ludovici saw it—of feminism. In addition, most of his novels concentrate on insightful studies of romance between the sexes. For my money, the best of Ludovici's novels is The Goddess that Grew Up, *the story of a girl struggling to break away from her unwittingly jealous father. Another of his readable novels,* French Beans, *deals with an attractive but extreme feminist called Domina Biggardyke, who is wooed away from the man-hating group she leads by the assertive banker André de Loudun—or Anthony Ludovici under another name. (If Loudun really means loud 'un, this might be Ludovici's allusion to his own fast-talking.)*

Although Ludovici admitted in private that he somewhat exaggerated now and again to clearly delineate his case, here he seems to be verging on self-parody. All in all, though, his non-fiction gives a picture of the radical differences between the minds of men and women that finds an echo in the work of such modern psychologists as Glenn Wilson, the author of The Great Sex Divide *(London, 1989).*

By all accounts, Ludovici worshipped his mother. He noted in Woman: A Vindication *(pp. xiv–xv) that 'in my passionate love for her, my love for my subject may well be said to have begun'. Not surprisingly, no other woman in his life ever reached his ideals. His own wife, whom he married in 1920, was strangely dowdy, people have said. Ludovici, in contrast, always dressed to the nines. He had a handsome face, and he was full of life, interested in painting, novels, poetry, the theatre and psychology, and so he had plenty of female friends and admirers. He stood in direct opposition to the wooden, unimaginative men who failed to understand their women, his own multi-talented personality and acute insight contrasting with these bumbling males.*

Sex Roles

Each sex has the instincts, emotions and mental powers related to the kind of life that it will have to lead, and the corresponding limitation in selecting and rejecting. For instance, the male as the active participator in

coition is the wooer and initiator; he has to awaken desire for himself in the female, and finds his pleasure in these roles. The female finds pleasure in being captivated, in surrendering herself, in yielding to initiation, provided that she approves of the male. In his role of initiator, man develops boldness, leadership, the habit of dominance, responsibility, originality, independence. In her role of passive participator, woman develops shyness, prudery and coyness, sequaciousness, irresponsibility, imitativeness, dependence. (These are the oldest psychical consequences of sexual dimorphism and probably antecede by millions of years the qualities of mind which are associated with parenthood.) The active role in procreation leads to the rivalry of other males, and develops courage, fighting powers and a marked tendency to violent jealousy in the male, particularly when he is old. But the female, finding her sex-adaptations normally arranged for her, will not need to fight, nor will she develop courage and jealousy to the same extent as the male at this stage.

Happiness will be pursued by each sex in trying to fulfil the specialized functions that derive from its own role. And if the object be to make either sex miserable, this will be best achieved by compelling them to break bounds. Sexual desire is thus the need to perform a specialized function, and love for the opposite sex is attachment to the sexual object which makes this performance possible. Happiness comes with performance.

Each sex will find pleasure in the adaptations peculiar to its own role, and will pursue happiness by seeking those adaptations. The female will find pleasure in exhibitionism, while the male will find pleasure in voyeurism or, to put in plainly, in feasting his eyes. If the wooing has been successful—that is to say, if the female has been captivated—each sex will display its instincts to the full. There will be increased preliminary exhibitionism on the part of the female, and a corresponding increase of pleasure for her. In the same way there will be increased male voyeurism, and a like increase of pleasure for him. There will be a short period of increasing familiarity, the play of the sexes, which may be confined merely to secondary sexual characteristics. This will all be natural and clean. It has its basis deep down in the ancestors of the mammalia, and we cannot now eradicate the instincts that urge us to it. And during this time, while eagerness and pleasure will increase for both, barriers will break down. Each will then find further and greater joy in his or her particular part in the consummation. The passive, yielding role, if it is ably directed by the male,

will be enjoyed the female, while the violent active role, if he is versed in the arts of life, will be enjoyed by the male, and each will be grateful and proud …

History, science, fiction, the lives of all great peoples, the experience of every one of us—evidence of every kind and from every corner of the compass tells us convincingly how fundamental and how wonderful this relationship is. Some of the greatest and noblest acts of heroism have been performed precisely for the sake of this love which unites two people of different sexes, and examples could be multiplied *ad infinitum* to show the extremes of devotion, fidelity and happiness which it inspires. (*Man: An Indictment*, pp. 15–18)

The history of most cultures seems to teach the following moral: that the relation of the sexes is always a fluctuating balance of male and female elements, and that at every stage in social development the bisexual components of each man and each woman tend to assert themselves to the utmost of their capacity, within the limits allowed by the values and the customs of the people. The check upon the expression by the male of his latent femininity thus consists of: (a) virile values, (b) masculine pursuits, (c) the single-minded preoccupation with male problems, and (d) the process of selection, which, operating through the taste imposed by the values, tends to keep down the proportion of males with prominent feminine characteristics. Thus the femininity of the male, where such checks exist, becomes what psychologists term recessive and may remain latent for centuries.

The check upon the expression by the female of her latent masculinity consists of: (a) her male environment, (b) the feminine pursuits, (c) the single-minded preoccupation with female problems, and (d) the process of selection, which, operating through the taste imposed by values, tends to keep down the proportion of females with pronounced masculine characteristics. Thus the masculinity of the female, where such checks exist, also becomes recessive and may remain latent for centuries.

Surrounded by males who maintain masculine standards, and who are capable of giving the highest expression to masculine ability and taste, the male elements in women tend to grow furtive, timid and averse from expression. A woman then knows that she only make herself ridiculous by trying to measure her rudimentary maleness against masculinity of the full-

fledged brand. In an environment of masculine men, therefore, her femininity tends to be expressed with boldness, and selection operates in favour of females with only latent masculinity.

The moment, however, she finds, as she does in periods of male degeneracy, that the expression of her latent masculinity does not make her appear ridiculous—that is to say, that the amount of her masculinity can, without appearing absurd by comparison, be measured against the masculinity of her menfolk—there is no longer anything to make her male elements recessive, and her maleness is likely to become developed at the cost of her femaleness, while the process of selection will operate in favour of a multiplication of females with excessive masculinity, and vice versa.

This does not mean that the female with strong male elements is necessarily to be deprecated. For, provided her male environment is always sufficiently beyond her in masculinity to make her male side recessive, no harm is likely to arise, and the multiplication of malish women then contributes without evil results to the cultivation of a virile people. This happened in Sparta and was successful from the ninth to the fourth century BC without the appearance of a woman's movement, because until the fourth century there was no marked degeneration of the male. It also happened in England. And the presence of a large proportion of masculine women in our midst today is not in itself a proof of the degeneracy of our men. For as a virile culture we required masculine women who would not introduce too much of the feminine element into our stock. It is the present unadaptedness of these women, their present free expression of their maleness at the cost of their femaleness, which is a sign of male degeneracy, because it means that their menfolk have not remained sufficiently beyond them in male characters to make their masculinity recessive.

The question, therefore, is whether there are always signs of masculine degeneracy, accompanied by female virility, in societies where women tend to dominate. The test is whether the male elements in the woman are being freely expressed. That there were such signs in ancient Athens, Rome and eighteenth-century France, I have already shown. The fact that the *hetairai* of Athens consorted with the philosophers, and instructed so famous a man as Socrates, is a comment at once upon the Socratic philosophy and upon the *hetairai,* while the historical proofs we have of the wanton cruelty of Roman matrons in the period of the decline, and of the viragoes that Rome

produced during the Empire, leave us in no doubt that the male elements in the Roman women of the first century AD had long ceased to be recessive. Cruelty in woman, which is the morbid expression of that part of her male elements that includes sadism, is always a sign of unrestrained bisexuality, and although it is by no means the only sign it occurs again and again in periods of masculine decline. The diabolical cruelty of the women of the French Revolution revolted even the male terrorists themselves, and we must not forget that, since extravagant and maudlin humanitarianism is only an inverted and socially permitted form of sadism, the display of excessive humanitarianism in modern England is really as suspicious as was the cruelty of the later Roman matrons. (*Man: An Indictment*, pp. 87–91)

Female Psychology

Take the little jewel constituting man's small instant of sexual ecstasy and beat it out to a length sufficiently great to cover twenty to thirty months, and sometimes more, and you have its extended and attenuated equivalent for the female. Until woman has gathered up all the experiences that constitute her participation and her share of pleasure in the sexual act, and which are distributed over the period above-mentioned, her sexual life and the pleasure it brings to her cannot be said to be complete. Even the craving for the proper functioning of her organs and the primary instinct that animates and actuates her cannot be gratified unless she picks up every one of the moments strewn over that space of time—unless, that is to say, she passes through the whole cycle of events and sensations that go to make up her complete relationship to man and to the child.

To suppose, by a false analogy with man, that sexual union alone, without its natural results, is going to satisfy woman's body, however much she herself may be deluded into believing it will, is nothing more nor less than to condone an act of pure cruelty, of savage violence, against a basic instinct and its elaborate generating mechanism.

As a matter of fact, although woman means everything to man's sexuality, and is the embodiment of all that his reproductive instinct can desire, even when it is as its keenest, man means very little to woman. He is, after all, no more than the sparking-plug that sets an elaborate process going, and the brief moment in which his share in her business is accomplished, and the incomplete pleasure it affords her, are ridiculously insignificant when compared with the importance he himself would fain

attach to them. Woman's supposed devotion to man, and even her love for him, is therefore much more of an illusion than man's love for woman. Regarded dispassionately and coolly, woman's love for man must be more or less of an exaggerated and romantic ideal. He is merely the first station on a long and delightful journey in which the subsequent destination is the chief concern. Of course he may be desired again as the first station for a second, third, fourth or fifth journey, but it is always self-deception that induces any woman to regard a man as more than that, as more final, more satisfying than that, although utilitarian motives may induce her to exploit and use his social instinct to the utmost while she is serving Nature's and her own ends by having children by him. (*Woman: A Vindication*, pp. 72–3)

Whether we appeal to folklore, to the proverbs of the nations or to the earliest legends of mankind, we invariably encounter in the traditional wisdom of humanity judgements upon woman which are more or less unanimous in condemning her bad temper, her disloyalty, her dishonesty, her vanity, her malice and her insolence. The very attitude of the common people towards witchcraft after the Reformation points to a curious popular readiness to believe in the evil influences of the female, for the fact that aged women, and not aged men, were the suspected parties in the persecutions against supposed cases of necromancy is significant, even if we deny the validity of the charges that were brought against these unfortunate wretches … I have dealt with the two principal legends of antiquity—that of Pandora and that of Eve—in which woman is specifically identified with the introduction of evil on earth, and I shall have to return to the subject here, for it cannot be merely a coincidence that in these oldest of human myths there is this connection between woman and evil. In *The Law Book of Manu*, which represents ancient Hindu opinion, the character of women meets again with the same charges. We read:

> Through their passion for men, through their mutable temper, through their natural heartlessness, they become disloyal to their husbands, however carefully they may be guarded in this world. Knowing their disposition, which the Lord of creatures laid in them at the creation, to be such, (even) man must strenuously exert himself to guard them. When creating them, Manu allotted to woman (love of their) bed, (of their) seat and (of) ornament, impure desires, wroth, dishonesty, malice and bad conduct (IX, 15–17).

Lombroso and Ferrero actually regard deception as being ‘physiological’ in women. They ascribe it to her weakness (which makes it necessary for her to rely on craft to achieve her ends), to her periodical functional disturbances, to her modesty, to the pretences necessary to acquiring an ascendancy over man, to the duties of maternity and to one or two other inevitable circumstances in her life. In chapter 8 of their work, they adduce the testimony of such acute psychologists as Flaubert, Balzac, Zola, Schopenhauer, Weininger, Molière to support their contention that in woman lying is instinctive. We might add Shakespeare, Luther, Byron, Nietzsche, La Bruyère and many others to the list. No matter where we turn, or to whom we refer, we find more or less the same verdict. It lies recorded in an Arab proverb,[13] just as it lies, though perhaps more obscurely, in most of that ‘tinsel of sentiment’ with which, utterly false as it is, woman insists upon veiling the natural relations of the sexes, while we must not forget that for hundreds of years a great and very profound people, the Mussulmans of Europe and Asia, have denied woman a soul.

The evidence of profound psychologists, the substance of myths, the content of national proverbs, the personal experience, in short, of all those who have learnt to know women generation after generation all point to this conclusion: that there is a certain duplicity and unscrupulousness in their nature, against which it is only a matter of ordinary caution for man to be on his guard.

On the other hand, in all countries with a modern, democratic outlook, where woman’s influence is in the ascendant, and where men are inclined to a pronounced romanticism of thought, there is no quality, no jewel of human virtue too priceless for woman to be thought worthy of it. (*Woman: A Vindication,* pp. 280–2)

For the truth is … that even in those departments of social life which for centuries, almost from time immemorial, have constituted practically the undisputed domain of woman—woman’s empire, woman’s peculiar field for enterprise and initiative, where her independence and supremacy have been unchallenged: in cooking, clothing and childcare—such ineptitude, such inability to improve, such gross and stubborn stupidity have been shown that only when men took over these departments of knowledge, as special branches of study, was there any sign, any hope, any certainty of progress being made.

Even if we were so easily hoodwinked as to be led to admit that woman's relative intellectual inferiority, her lack of creative and inventive ability in other spheres, did not constitute a natural sexual characteristic, but were the outcome of a deliberate attempt on our part to withhold from her the opportunities of acquiring ability in those spheres, how are we to explain the marked deficiency of intelligence and initiative which she has shown as a sex in the elaboration and perfection of those arts or sciences, such as cooking, clothing and childcare, which have practically been her exclusive domain for ages? Here she was supreme. Here she was entirely free and untrammelled. By now she could have converted each of these pursuits into an exact science. She has had the time, the hereditary bias and the accumulated knowledge of tradition all on her side. And yet, as we know, it was only when men took these departments in hand that they began to wear the aspect of properly regulated and scientific occupations.

Today, the high authorities, the only authorities, on cooking are men. Today, if a woman for some reason or other is unable to nurse her newborn child, she cannot turn to the traditional wisdom of her sex; she cannot even turn to a classical work on child welfare written by *one* member of her sex; she must turn to man, for the high authorities on this subject, at the time of writing, are all men … or else women who have learnt all they know directly from them. Today, every fashion, whether of men's or of women's clothing, is entirely the creation of the male mind. A group of men in England direct the former, and a group of men in France autocratically prescribe the latter …

In England in the Middle Ages a proverb was current to the effect that 'God sent us meat and the devil ordained the cooking of it'. The cooking of food, which has remained in the hands of women for a longer period in England than in France, is in England notoriously atrocious. The clothing of women, which in England is more remote from the male focus of inspiration than in France, is in England proverbially inferior, despite fashion books and a constant cross-Channel stream of British fashion spies. While the fact that child welfare centres are being opened up everywhere, inspired originally by male doctors and the results of male research, in order to teach women how to take care of their babies, is surely proof enough of the abysmal ignorance into which the traditional mother of history has sunk, regarding a calling which has been her own exclusive field from the

beginning of time, and which she ought to have perfected at the very dawn of history. (*Woman: A Vindication*, pp. 298–300)

Unlike man, whose nature is more variegated and more subject to variation, woman is possessed of a *primum mobile* that we can recognize—that is to say, she is actuated by a mainspring, a ruling motive, that we can observe in operation. As we have seen, this *primum mobile* constitutes her the chief custodian and preserver of life, and the chief promoter of life's multiplication. In fact, these two functions constitute her principal importance, and endow her with her great power and her great value. Everything else in woman is of minor significance. If, therefore, we assume at this stage in our treatise—for the point has been demonstrated often enough—that the positive woman's incessant and unconscious impetus is in the direction of life and its multiplication, we may expect to find in woman all the virtues that guarantee the survival of the species, and all the vices which life itself reveals in the pursuit of this same object.

Seeing that the pursuit of life and its multiplication is in Nature an activity that is untrammelled by any moral consideration whatsoever, we may ask ourselves, whether in view of the difficulty of improving upon Nature's methods in this respect, and in view, moreover, of the fact that woman is a child of Nature, we are not justified in recognizing in woman a *primum mobile* that is also completely amoral.

If we are so justified, then it follows that all woman's deeper characteristics, as Nature's characteristics, are not moral but immoral, not social but unsocial, not lawful but lawless.

Let us proceed to examine this statement more narrowly. A woman's deepest characteristics are termed by us unmoral. What does that precisely mean? We have admitted that what constitutes woman's greatest value and her greatest power is that she is the chief supporter of the vital functions: the promotion and preservation of life. If, therefore, she is also immoral, it must mean that in the fulfilment of her destiny she has often to run counter, as Nature does, to our standard of moral integrity. Therefore, that if she were moral this would be a hindrance and an obstacle in the way of her destiny. But how will she reveal this immorality or amorality? My reply is: in being, like Nature, utterly unscrupulous in the means she adopts to achieve her vital end—that is to say, more intent on the vital end than on anything else, such as truth, honour, justice, fair play, etc., etc. For morality

means scruples, it involves the necessity of regarding scruples as obstacles in the way of certain actions. If, therefore, we can show that woman, like Nature, is unscrupulous in her promotion and preservation of life, we will have gone some way towards establishing the fact of her immorality.

Before, however, we proceed with this inquiry, we should like to remind all readers, who at this point may begin to feel their cheeks mantling with indignation, that, since from the optimist's point of view it is desirable for the human species to survive, a very high sanction indeed prevails over woman's vital unscrupulousness, however surprising and unexpected its consequences may prove to be. For instance, if, as we hope we have already abundantly shown, woman's chief and deepest concern is the multiplication and preservation of life, it is obvious that, when confronted by a situation in which a lie will secure her vital end, and one in which truth will defeat it, she will naturally and instinctively choose to lie; not because she necessarily prefers to lie, but because she is more concerned about the end in view than the means she adopts to achieve it, and every lie to her is a 'white' lie that secures her vital end. If, then, from a vital indifference to truth she ultimately reveals an ordinary indifference to truth in the common and less vital circumstances of everyday life, we must blame not a fundamental perversity of her nature, which would seem to suggest that moral obliquity is a deep-rooted and ineradicable element of her psyche, but a self-preservative characteristic of the race which, although manifesting itself, as it were, unnecessarily and provokingly in everyday affairs, nevertheless, if absent altogether, would prove the most serious menace to the survival of humanity. In the form of a simile we might say that, just as the good army marksman annoys us when in peacetime he disturbs our quiet moments with his incessant revolver or rifle practice, and his insatiable desire to pot anything and everything, yet we applaud and defend his love of his firearm and his skill with it when in time of war he and his like defend our homes and ourselves by accounting for numbers of the enemy.

Is that clear? In plain English, to take an extreme case, if a girl is to be equipped with that ability for wiles and small deceptions which, despite adverse circumstances, are to enable her to secure a lover and a husband and a large family early in life; if, moreover, she is to be prepared to go to extreme lengths to defend and promote the welfare of her children (as all good mothers are), and also to secure their survival and success over the

heads of other and possibly more deserving or better children (as all good mothers are prepared to do); if, moreover, in her relations with her husband and her children, she is to display that tact and diplomacy which always secure her the victory in domestic negotiations; then, it seems to me, we have a creature whose special gifts will extend beyond her family and its vital concerns, and invade all the other circumstances of her life, and who will inevitably practise wiles and small deceptions in those conditions where life, its multiplication and preservation are not necessarily in question.

The fact, however, that such a creature may be detected again and again in some act of unscrupulousness, not necessarily concerned directly with life or some vital interest, does not mean that she is perverse or depraved for the sake of perversity and depravity, as ends in themselves, but simply that her vital unscrupulousness cannot well be confined to the business of life and its multiplication, and cannot exist as a useful characteristic of her being, without manifesting itself in conditions and circumstances where no vital consideration is at stake. In other words, if you are to have a good house-dog who will protect you from burglars at night, you must warn your milkman and your dustman, although they have no dishonest intention in entering your garden, not to go too near him, for his useful characteristic is bound to manifest itself in circumstances and conditions where its usefulness is not vital.

When from folklore and myth, from national proverbs and tradition, and from the textbooks of the oldest religions, therefore, we learn that woman is two-faced or false or treacherous or disloyal, while we cannot expect these sources of information to give us also their reasons for their verdict, we have at least a hint that something deeper is in question than an obliquity of mind. For one would have thought that centuries of schooling would have eradicated these characteristics from women and that, if they have failed to do so, something more essential to woman’s nature than a mere perversion of mind may be suspected. Neither is it enough to point, as Lombroso does, to woman’s relative weakness, to her periodical functional disturbances, to her modesty, etc., to account for a trait so universally attested.

The positive woman who is disloyal to her absent husband is not disloyal from weakness: she is disloyal owing to the vital impulse of her large and important reproductive organs, which, after a spell of idleness, clamorously demand employment. The woman who lies about her age, or about her

antecedents, or about any other circumstance of her life, in order to secure a husband or a lover, does not do so because she is relatively weaker than the man she wishes to secure, but because, again, her unconscious mind urges her to procure fertilization at all costs.

The unfairness of the attitude of most psychologists and other men to the phenomenon of unreliability and deception in woman consists in the fact that they condemn it without understanding it; while those who neither condemn it nor understand it, stubbornly, stupidly and sentimentally deny it in the face of all the overwhelming evidence in proof of its existence. But when once you admit that duplicity and disloyalty in women are part of a vital principle making for the multiplication and preservation of life, and serving the best interests of the species, you are no longer even entitled to condemn those same characteristics when they happen to operate in circumstances and conditions inconvenient to yourself. You cannot always expect to have it both ways, and if the species profits by a certain principle in the female it must expect to pay for that principle somewhere, somewhen.

To attempt to make woman perfectly honest and upright would therefore be to attack the most vital impulse within her—that impulse which causes her to be eager to the point of unscrupulousness in securing and preserving a multiplication of life. And yet there are many wise fools, both men and women, who have solemnly set themselves that object, and are striving to achieve it by every means in their power.

If we observe Nature herself engaged upon the same task that constitutes woman’s principal concern in life, we observe the same unscrupulousness. Nature stops at nothing to achieve this end. All means are good to her: rapine, deception, falsehood, usurpation of rights, bullying, stealth, robbery, invasion and complete indifference to quality and desirability.

Life in Nature is a continuous process of interracial and intraracial struggles for power and supremacy, with no principle, except the one of ‘more life’ in each race or species, governing the whole. Every species behaves as if it alone had the right to exist on earth, irrespective of all other claims. The fact that there are more species of parasites than of any other kind of organism shows that this universal process of rapine and deception is pursued without any natural exercise of favour for what, from the human standpoint, can be called desirability. The parasite kills the human genius

just as readily as it kills the cow, and the locusts devour the food which is the only sustenance of the ewe and her lamb. Without scruple and without favour, Nature's one cry is 'life!' and evermore 'life!', and whether the success of the struggle falls to what we should call the 'nobler' species or to the 'inferior' is a matter of utter indifference to her …

In woman I recognize some of the principal virtues that make for a continuance of the human species on earth: (1) unreflecting constancy to the demands of life; (2) untiring interest in the processes of life and its multiplication (which in its minor ramifications lead to that intense concern about all human affairs, which, in opprobrious language, is called 'a love of scandalmongering'); (3) a capacity for desperate bravery in defending or succouring human life; (4) a capacity for single-minded devotion to her own offspring (which in its minor ramifications often manifests itself in the virgin, and in the spinster of all ages, as a single-minded devotion to a purpose, to an idea or to a cause); (5) a capacity for bodily purity or chastity, which in the more passionate type of woman is based upon an instinct to withhold herself until her heart and her affections are captured (this in its spiritual ramifications leads to intellectual obstinacy, conservatism or fanaticism. Thus, a woman's citadel of opinions, like her bodily citadel, is only liable to capitulation when her heart and her affections are engaged).

These five cardinal virtues of woman constitute her eternal claim to glory and to respect; in each of them she is a natural mistress, a gifted virtuosa. They are of so much value, of so much moment, to the human species, that they overshadow every catalogue of foibles and vices that has ever been drawn up against her by a Weininger or a Schopenhauer, and she who possesses them can afford even to forgive a Weininger or a Schopenhauer. Noble as they are in themselves, they can claim in addition the highest possible sanction and testimonial that it is possible for a human character to receive—the sanction and testimony of human survival itself, without which no virtue on earth can hope to last or to prevail, and by the side of which the mere applause and approval of one or many generations of men is but as a pair of bellows puffing in the wind.

To appreciate these virtues of woman at their proper worth, however, a stronger and more vital generation of people is needed than any that has appeared, in England at least, for the last 250 years. The very fact that, at the present day, the general consensus of opinion among men would accord

to woman quite a different set of virtues is a sufficient sign of the degeneracy that has occurred.

Today, for instance, a Parliament of Englishmen or Anglo-Saxons would, in enumerating woman's virtues, speak about: (1) her moralizing influence in society; (2) her unselfishness (whatever that may mean!); (3) her powers of self-sacrifice (this is the result of sick values and a confusion of thought …); (4) her intuition (a great myth, the outcome of woman's habit of saying the first thing that enters her head, and which, according to the laws of chance, must be right sometimes); (5) her humanitarianism (a mischievous misunderstanding)—all weak, or at least fictitious, qualities, that no full-blooded woman would ever do anything more than pretend to possess, and which made Huxley say that 'woman's virtue was man's most poetic fiction'!

If, however, we choose to dwell on the five cardinal virtues that derive directly from the great vital impulse within her, and to think of the many useful minor virtues that spring from them, we have a list which, if it is less goody-goody than the above, is both hardier and more compatible with reality.

From (1), which we call the unreflecting constancy to the demands of life, we can see the following as derivatives: (a) Woman's constancy to the circumstances (and therefore to the man) who enables her to meet the demands of life. (b) Her intensely keen sense of self-preservation, when the danger threatening her is not life-promoting. This accounts for her caution, her sagacity in suspecting the unfamiliar, and her over-anxiousness in public thoroughfares, or on railway platforms, on board ship, and in the neighbourhood of restive horses, etc. (c) Her quick recognition of the fact that a given environment cannot procure the demands of life, hence her mobility, tractableness, docility, amenability, and readiness to follow at great personal risk, until such time as she has found the environment that can procure her the demands of life. In all communities where marriage is difficult owing to a superfluity of women, girls thus show a tendency frequently to change their environment, and are quite unconscious that in so doing they are pursuing tactics which are calculated to enable them to meet life's demands. Thus, they will leave home to study political economy or scripture, and when that fails they will change over to child welfare or to nursing, and if that fails they will try secretarial work, giving as their reason at each change that the previous work 'did not satisfy them'. If economic

pressure compels, they will of course be forced to remain in one occupation, whether it satisfies the demands of life or not, but those who can afford it will, as a rule, be restless until they find an environment which promises them fertilization. (d) Her ability to put up with any number of inconveniences and discomforts, provided that the demands of life are procured for her, hence her stoicism in poverty or any other kind of distress, despite the fact that her children share it; hence her cheerful courage in those vital inconveniences connected with an existence in which the demands of life are being met: illness, the incessant clatter of many children, the hard work that a number of children imposes upon a poor female parent, etc., etc. (e) Her ability to treat all life emotionally. The very quality of unreasoning or unreflecting constancy to the demands of life involves an impulsive attitude towards them. I used the word ‘unreflecting’ purposely. It is because woman does not pause to reflect whether it is proper or expedient or right that she should perform a certain action to meet the demands of life that she can be so thoroughly relied upon to perform it punctually. If she reflected, it would presuppose hesitation, therefore delay, therefore possibly inaction. But it should be remembered that this attitude is a purely emotional one, and since the business of life, with the various relationships the family creates, is largely a matter of the emotions too, and not of the reflective or reasoning faculties, it follows that the tradition or history of woman’s mental life is largely confined to the play and exercise of the emotions. Life, as far as normal woman is concerned, is a matter of affection, of attachment and devotion, first to the man of her heart, and lastly to the children of her blood. Where she may be expected to be practised, gifted and versatile, therefore, is precisely in this sphere of the emotions, for they alone are capable of directing that unreflecting form of action that the demands of life impose upon her. A mistress of feeling, therefore, we cannot expect her to be so perfect at reflection.

From (2), which we call the untiring interest in the processes of life and its multiplication, we can see the following derivations: (a) Woman’s helpfulness and readiness to be of use in all those circumstances in a neighbour’s, friend’s or relative’s home, in which she comes in close contact with life’s most serious business, at moments of childbirth, serious illness, and death, and particularly at moments of great domestic upheavals, such as times of serious disagreement, and all tragic occurrences, between couples. The fact that these virtues necessarily involve such an all-

embracing interest in human affairs, that a love of scandal is an almost inevitable counterpart of them, is not difficult to see. The evils of scandalmongering, however, are grossly exaggerated. All decent, humane and humanity-loving people revel in scandal, and I have never met a woman who was worth knowing who was not an inveterate scandalmonger. ‘The proper study of mankind is Man’, said Pope, and he was entirely right. But what is scandalmongering, and the exhaustive discussion of one’s acquaintances, relatives and friends, but an essential description of that ‘proper study’? Husbands who do not sympathize with their wives’ love of scandal, and who refuse to join with them in expatiating on tittle-tattle, are usually inhuman and narrow men, such men as make good engineers, good mathematicians, good chemists and good sailors or explorers. These men will expect their wives to listen breathlessly when they discuss sport or some other futile subject as remote as possible from humanity, and yet will show impatience if their wives discuss the marital relations of their next-door neighbour. (b) This virtue makes women very observant of little odd characteristics in their fellow-creatures. And if women are, as a rule, such good mimics and imitators, it is due partly to the earnestness with which they observe other men and women (the other reason for their power of imitation I shall give under [5]). Women will frequently draw wrong conclusions from the traits they have observed—this I do not deny—but the interesting point is that they usually observe the traits.

From (3), which we called desperate bravery in defending and succouring human life, we can see the following derivatives: (a) The readiness to incur mortal risk for a child of their own (quite common); for a husband (very rare, except in early days of marriage when children have not yet arrived); for a loved human creature of any kind. (b) A certain foolhardy and reckless daring in engaging overwhelming odds for the sake of achieving a vital purpose (a woman will assault a man twice her size and three or four times her strength at such moments). (c) A capacity for a fierce unrelenting hatred towards enemies, deceivers or betrayers of those she loves. (d) In the realm of the spirit, a readiness to perform a mad feat of intrepidity to defend or promote an idea (Miss Emily Davidson in that marvellous rush at the King’s horse in the Derby of 1913. We loathed the cause for which she fought, but we honoured and admired the fierce single-mindedness with which she and the other militant suffragettes fought for it).

From (4), which we call a capacity for single-minded devotion to her own offspring, we can see the following derivatives: (a) Woman's unswerving tenacity of purpose in serving and ministering to those she loves. (b) Her indefatigable industry on behalf of those who depend on her, so that she is able, like a horse, to work herself to death, provided she loves and knows she is loved. (c) In the spiritual realm, her capacity for fanatical adherence to a cause, to a belief, to a faith, and her corresponding fierce antagonism to those who oppose that cause or faith. (d) Her pride in her own offspring and her consequent tendency to undervalue or to dislike the offspring of others. When this sentiment is stimulated to its zenith by the fact that the offspring of others happen to be the offspring of the former possessor of her man's love, you get the staggering cruelties of the stepmother. Thus in woman's nature does good merge into evil, and evil merge into good …

Everything connected with this virtue is at once so useful to the race, and so unique and unforgettable as an individual experience, that it seems only fitting to pause for a moment here to dwell on one or two of its most stirring features. Passing over the first months and years when the only force between helpless, pitiably dependent life and death, or at least neglect, is precisely this mother's instinct, this jealous care, when inarticulate infancy can neither acknowledge, return thanks for, nor, what is perhaps more perplexing, realize all the thousand and one services that are cheerfully performed in order to promote its growth and its comfort; passing over, too, those moments of the silent watcher, of the sleepless sentry, in which, during times of danger, every breath is a prayer, and every smile a song of thanksgiving; we would like more particularly to concentrate upon that period of early childhood, on that age of babbling tongue and unsteady gait, when most of that which is to be of use in life, and indeed most of that which is never to be forgotten in life, is learnt at the mother's side. Not that we would wish to reduce by one iota the importance of the former period, the most wonderful aspect of which is, perhaps, the joy that is felt by either side in simply playing its appointed role, but rather because in the latter period both parties are conscious of this same joy, and are in a position to prolong it, transmute it and preserve it, until long after that age when the positions become reversed, and dependence has begun on the side of the once protecting mother.

There is in the child of a good mother a spirit so confiding, so receptive, so perfectly trustful, that possibly at no other age are the prerequisites for sound education more completely present than in those first years of life at the dawn of which a fold of the mother's skirt still offers a substantial amount of support to legs that are learning both bearing power and balance. What happens then, and how it happens, will of course never be properly recorded, for lessons are given and lessons are learnt without sufficient conscious effort on either side for the method to be made a subject of exact knowledge. But the result is gradually made manifest by the marvellous transformation of an inarticulate little animal, whose whole horizon is bounded by food, sleep and apparently purposeless limb-exercises, into a creature that can express its wishes, demand explanations of the things about it, learn to recognize the first rules of decent behaviour and, what is more, shed its own fresh light on the problems of existence. And if what it learns later on may, from the standpoint of material utility, bear a more imposing and less chaotic aspect, certainly nothing it has failed to learn at this period will ever be acquired at any subsequent stage of its existence. It cannot be said that it has mastered any definite system of thought, or that it has memorized any particular striking fact; it may not even have learnt the very patience and gentleness which its mother has constantly exhibited in her care of it. Nevertheless, it has learnt things which, in solemn truth, can be said to be little short of priceless.

Let it not be suspected, however, because we can find only vague phraseology for our purpose, that we wish to claim for this early education an indispensable character that it really does not possess. What is it then that makes it almost impossible to give a more narrow description of it without losing all grasp of its magnitude and importance? It is the fact that from this education are derived those qualities of heart and mind which, though hardly ever referred to at critical moments in a man's life, are nevertheless among the most serviceable and powerful of life's weapons. The man who has had a good mother has learnt to feel a certain confidence in his own unaided efforts, because the best in him has been diligently sought, encouraged and brought to the fore; he has acquired a certain vigorous sanguineness and courage because, having started life so well, in such a glorious morning of sunshine, he is conscious of stored-up warmth within him, upon which he can fall back in his moments of loneliness, gloom and trouble; but, above all, he has been launched forth into the world

with at least one solid experience, one ineffaceable impression of human kindness and human beauty, and this, while it gives him a perpetual criterion of value and criticism, shielding him from the specious and the base, also prevents him from ever feeling that despair and doubt about himself and his fellows which in moments of deep tribulation paralyses effort and precludes the possibility of hope.

This is what the equipment amounts to with which a loving mother can endow her son. Quite apart from the joys that are derived from deep filial emotions, and from that unique relationship of a mother to her son, these are among the chief benefits that the relationship necessarily involves. Most of the great men in history owe their greatness partly to this equipment; most of the great men in history—Schopenhauer, Byron, de Quincey—whose relationship to their mothers was not ideal, reveal in their works the effects of this deficiency; and he who ventures to question that here, indeed, I have laid my finger on what is quintessential in the education that a good mother gives to her child, and incapable of satisfactory substitution by any other means in her absence, is one of those unfortunates from whom life has withheld this most precious of all her blessings.

It is here that woman excels; it is here that she can defy all competition, and it is in this role that the best in herself, and some of the best in mankind, is developed and sustained. Anything else that she may do must be always second best to this, and those who, by misrepresentation and appeals to vanity, persuade her while she is yet quite young that there are callings better than, or at least as good as, motherhood for her are enemies not only of woman, but also of the species.

From (5), which we call a capacity for bodily purity or chastity, which is based upon an instinct to resist fertilization until heart and affection are engaged, we can see the following derivatives: (a) Woman’s tendency to a certain rather becoming dignity and pride, which come to their zenith at the moment of the most heated appeal made by the lover who has failed to engage her heart and affection. This on the spiritual side leads to a power of renitency against conviction and persuasion, which frequently makes a woman a most powerful and reliable ally in a secret movement or in a secret intrigue. (b) Since the demands of life make it necessary, when once woman has abandoned her attitude of chaste resistance, to yield wholly and unreservedly to the male, there is in all women a certain sequaciousness, a certain docility, a marked predilection in favour of subservience and

subordination to those who have engaged their affections, which makes of woman the most naturally constituted follower, disciple, servant that it is possible to find. On the spiritual side, it makes her acutely subject to guidance and direction, to receptivity, to suggestion and to imitation. But seeing that sequaciousness, imitation, whether in regard to opinion, mannerism or fashion, is the reverse of original production and involves an absence or a weakness of the initiating power of personality, we are bound to recognize in woman, as a direct consequence of her necessary physical and psychological surrender, when once the attitude of chastity has been abandoned, a lack of originating power, a lack of that prehensile attitude of mind which seizes and does not wait to be seized, and which is behind all male emancipation, aggression, originality and inventiveness. This, indeed, is the other reason which under (1) we said we had yet to give for woman's power of imitation. Thus Arabella Kenealy calls the sex-instinct 'in the normal girl, responsive rather than initiative'.

From this fifth virtue, which, when the attitude of chastity is abandoned, becomes converted into subjection and submission, are thus derived woman's suppleness, her plasticity, her promptness to assimilate and to form herself according to another's pattern, and her ability to adapt herself to circumstances.

In all these derivatives of the five cardinal virtues of woman we can trace the indirect but certain connection with the vital *primum mobile* in her nature, which is her deep concern about life and its multiplication. On the same principle, therefore, it ought to be possible to enumerate the cardinal vices of woman and their auxiliary manifestations. For if a creature's virtues are the outcome of its instincts, its bodily formation and the functions it has to perform, its vices must surely have a similar origin.

In the positive woman only those vices may be recognized which are inseparable from her functions as a promoter and preserver of life, for all the other vices she may or may not have in common with man. Those that are constantly characteristic of her are: (1) duplicity and an indifference to truth, (2) lack of taste, (3) vulgarity, (4) love of petty power, (5) vanity and (6) sensuality.

These six cardinal vices have been recognized in her in all ages; they have been censured and deplored, but no-one so far, to the best of my knowledge, has ever traced them to a basic vital principle within her. No-

one has ever said of them, for instance, what I say of them: that to attempt to eradicate them from her nature would amount to an attack on the most solid guarantee we possess of human survival.

While discussing the derivative and minor vices that descend from these six cardinal vices I shall, however, also show the connection of the latter with woman's innate vital principle, as in some cases this is not obvious at first sight.

No. 1, duplicity and an indifference to truth, has already been discussed above, and its relation to the will to life abundantly demonstrated. Let it suffice, therefore, to point out that an additional proof of its inveteracy in woman is to be found in the tinsel of false sentiment that women particularly have drawn over the natural relations of the sexes—a tinsel which not only promotes marriage and parenthood by concealing their sordid and tiresome side from the young male, but which also prevents both sexes in most nations from detecting this less prepossessing side of matrimony throughout their whole lifetime. If the reader wishes to test which sex really values this tinsel of false sentiment as its own, as its most powerful weapon, let him attempt to tear it away from the relations of the sexes in the presence of both women and men, and then he will see from the unreasoning fury he provokes in the former which sex is most to blame for its existence.

Again, women are notorious for their tact and presence of mind in embarrassing situations; indeed, the tactfulness or diplomacy of women is so well known in France that it has become proverbial. 'On arrive par la femme',[14] say French 'climbers' whose ambitions exceed their gifts and who have to rely on diplomacy to achieve their ends. But the presence of mind which is but the necessary mental condition for saying the right word, for turning away wrath, suspicion or envy, for assuaging mortified vanity, and for making people forget their shortcomings is in reality only an essential prerequisite of successful falsehood. Let the 'lying' be as white as you choose in tactfulness and diplomacy, it matters little; what is important is to remember that neither tactfulness nor diplomacy is possible without the essential equipment of the born and resourceful liar—this equipment being an ability to say something, at a moment's notice, which is not the natural or obvious reaction to a given stimulus or provocation. Little girls show this ability quite early, and easily outclass boys in the celerity with which they discover a plausible and innocent explanation for a reprehensible act in which they have been caught redhanded. The fact that women are difficult to deal with under cross-examination is well known among lawyers, and their skill in drawing red herrings across the path of any enquiry directed against themselves makes them stubborn and evasive witnesses at all times when they have anything to conceal.

No. 2. Woman's fundamental lack of taste is the fact to which … I ascribed the two myths of Pandora and Eve, in which woman is depicted as being the cause of the fall of man, and of the introduction of evil on earth. I demonstrated this fundamental bad taste by pointing to women's inability to select and recognize the best men and their general preference for inferior men, the reason of this preference being the greater facility with which the latter are ruled and made amenable to women's love of petty power. I also showed that this bad

taste is rooted in the attitude of the mother to her child, which, consisting as it does chiefly in a delight in the exercise of petty power over a helpless creature, causes women not only to prefer the baby in long clothes before the full-grown child but also frequently to prefer the crippled or the physiologically botched child before the hale and hearty one, because of the former's more permanent helplessness. I showed also how women prefer lapdogs before large dogs for the same reason, and reminded the reader that the Romans wisely left it to the father to decide which of his children should survive and which should be suppressed, because they knew that women, having no taste and being guided only by what most gratified their lust of petty power, could not be trusted to make a decision wisely. I also ascribed to the prevalence and ascendancy of women's views and sentiments nowadays the fact that the world was growing so ugly and degenerate (physically), for only if we assume the woman's attitude of irrational tenderness to cripples and the physiologically botched can we regard them with anything else than loathing and impatience.

What I did not do … was to show the connection between woman's fundamental bad taste, or lack of taste, with the vital principle within her, and this I shall proceed to do now. This, however, will not prove difficult, for it amounts simply to emphasizing woman's profound likeness to Nature in blindly pursuing life and its multiplication at all costs.

If we think of the immensely precarious situation of the newborn infant or animal, its lack of all means of protection, of mobility and of procuring nourishment independently, its lack of warmth and frequently of the very equipment for preserving warmth (clothing in the human infant, and fur and feathers in the young animal and bird respectively), we realize at once the immense importance to the species of an instinct in the mother which makes the provision of all these deficiencies a joy, a passionate need, in fact a delight worth fighting for. If the newborn creature is to be preserved and the species is to survive, there must be no possible loophole, no conceivable crevice or chink, in the armour of the natural instinct through which any doubt, any hesitation whatever, may enter as to the immediate urgency and desirability of succouring it. The moment in the life of the young creature is too critical, the situation is too precarious. Here you have pitiable helplessness, pathetic dependence, extreme vulnerability. The future of the species depends upon these unreliable qualities being turned into reliable ones by the only creature in the young one's neighbourhood who, while being necessarily present at its birth, is in a position to offer first aid. If then there were any excuse or pretext for indecision, any humming and ha-ing over the question of desirability, the 'best of the brood', the 'most promising of the litter', etc., life's very future would be in the balance, the precious instinct which secures the safety and the survival of the young creature would be undermined or at least no longer impelled unreflectingly to do the right thing in the right way. There must be an uncritical unreasoning impulse to succour, to warm, to protect and to feed, otherwise the speed, the precision and the earnestness with which these functions have to be performed would be fatally impaired, disastrously hampered. Let the struggle for existence be ever so severe subsequently, one thing must remain assured and inviolable, and that is that the mother's instinct must not have any excuse to fail, it must not even be able to pause to question, to pick or to choose. Discernment at this moment would make survival doubtful, but there cannot be, there must not be, any doubt.

Besides, if organic evolution be true, it depends upon the operation of three factors: (1) the survival of the fittest through the action of (2) natural selection, with (3) occasional appearance of variations from type.

Now, if the female of the species is to exercise discernment before she succours her young, if her action is to be deliberative and not impulsive, what becomes of these variations which, when happy, lead to a new development of the species or actually to a new variety of species? Happy variations are just as odd, qua type, as unhappy variations. But if the female's instinct is to preserve life, it will preserve one just as passionately as the other. Discrimination would prove fatal to both. The very process of organic evolution, if it be a fact, therefore depends upon the lack of discrimination in the motherly instinct, and the hypothesis of organic evolution certainly assumes it.

The instinct in the female to succour young life of any kind, therefore, is useful to Nature's scheme. It is an indispensable factor in Nature's plan. In the lower animals it is demonstrated by the ease with which a female of one species can be made to act as foster-mother to the young of another. Books on natural history mention many such cases: cats that have reared leverets and young squirrels, hens that rear ducklings, and the classical natural instances of birds like the pipit, the water wagtail, etc., rearing the young of the cuckoo. The latter, of course, is a parasitic abuse in Nature of the female's undiscriminating instinct to succour, but it is nevertheless an excellent example of the fact I have been trying to establish.

It is true that in the human species this lack of discrimination in the female operates as a preserver both of desirable and undesirable varieties, but as in all modern civilizations the father is no longer allowed, as he was by ancient Sparta or Rome, to override the female's lack of taste in this matter, and unsuccessful variations from type are more common than geniuses, it follows that the female's point of view, now that it is supported by the state and public opinion, must lead to the survival of a vast number of undesirable human beings in our midst.

Thus, although the human female's instinct is seen to be a vital one, and though her lack of taste must be regarded as part of the general scheme of life, it must tend nowadays to an enormous amount of degeneration.

This, however, is not precisely our point. The facts we wish to establish are, in the first place, that in woman's role of mother the blind instinct to succour, to protect and to preserve the helpless creature that she bears is of vital importance to the race; and, secondly, that this blind instinct necessarily involves a deep-seated and incorrigible lack of taste. The fact that subsequently—that is to say, when the undesirable offspring, be it cripple, cretin or idiot, grows up—it is frequently cherished by the mother more than her whole and hearty children is but a confirmation of the point I am attempting to make, for it shows that what appeals to the true mother, and what according to our whole argument must and ought to appeal, is not the particular excellence of a given child, not its claim to any particular form of desirability, but simply its helplessness. And since in the cripple, the cretin and the idiot helplessness is prolonged to a much later age than in the healthy child, it is the former to which unsophisticated and simpleminded motherhood naturally inclines.

The consequences of this fundamental and vital lack of taste in women are, of course, considerable.

When we read in Manu's *Book of Laws* that 'women do not care for beauty', when Lombroso and Ferrero, in discussing woman's taste, state that 'en général, la beauté et l'intelligence la laissent indifférente',[15] and when we find Rousseau saying 'les femmes en général n'aiment aucun art, ne se connoissent à aucun',[16] we feel inclined to object, because we know of individual instances of women who have shown a marked feeling of beauty. Neither Lombroso, Manu nor Rousseau tells us, however, that their respective statements only refer to a specific and superficial manifestation of a deep and unalterable law. When once we realize that law, we see that these men must be right; not, however, because individual women have shown an indifference to beauty, but because the sex as a whole has no taste, and that, wherever discernment for beauty is pronounced in a woman, she either diverges from type or has undergone some special educating influence.

We are better able to understand now why the forms of art have all been man's invention, although they have sometimes been successfully imitated by women (in the novel), and why clothes, even those that fill the wardrobes of women, are all derived from an original masculine designing centre in London or Paris. We can also see why women are so prone to select and to associate with the worst and most unpromising type of men, why they have no flair (except on the sexual side and even that is by no means infallible) where men are concerned, and why even their palates and their stomachs have never assisted them in development of the culinary art, when they had it entirely in their own hands. But let us remember again that we cannot have it both ways, and that if we educated tastelessness away in women, we should be undermining one of the most valuable and fundamental of female instincts, the consequences of which alone can we safely hope to correct, without attempting to eliminate their cause.

No. 3. Woman’s vulgarity might be supposed to arise from her natural absence of taste. But, truth to tell, it is the outcome of a different basic principle in her. Many men have been conscious of it, but none, as far as I have been able to discover, has shown how essential it is, and how necessarily it derives from the vital functions of the female nature. Besides, there is a substantial difference between a lack of taste and vulgarity. The former is a defect, a minus. The latter is a definite quality which operates as a determined bias in an unrefined, rude and low direction. A person lacking taste may by a fluke select a tasteful thing. A vulgar person can in no circumstances be refined. It is not necessarily low or rude or unrefined in the mother to prefer the crippled or cretin child before the healthy one: that is simply tasteless. We could not call the mother vulgar because she prefers her child in long clothes before her grown-up child in knickerbockers. The grown-up child makes a stronger appeal to taste, owing to the greater harmony of his proportions, his articulateness, his intelligence and his greater command over his body and its movements, but as the mother is chiefly attracted by helplessness, it is the child in long clothes that she prefers. The appeals to taste do not affect her. It is tastelessness, therefore, and not vulgarity, that elects the child in long clothes. Thus we see there is a distinct difference between the two, and the one cannot derive from the other. It can aggravate the other, add to its seriousness as a social evil, complicate and multiply its errors, but it cannot spring from it. We call that person vulgar who constantly and consciously avoids those things that bear the hallmark of cultivation or refinement or careful selection in order deliberately to pursue, select, value and cherish those that bear the stamp of coarseness, brutality and baseness.

Now, woman constantly overlooks and avoids the former and as constantly pursues the latter, and we hope to show that she cannot help acting in this way—in fact, that in so doing she is obeying a vital instinct.

The records of the lives of artists reveal one singular fact most impressively, and that is the frequency with which they have had to associate with immoral women, or women of the working-classes. Heine, Goethe, Rodin, Van Gogh, Wagner, etc.—they are all alike in this; so much so, indeed, that Weininger, with his customary superficiality, thought fit to assert that ‘great men have always preferred women of the prostitute type’. Weininger is wrong: great men have not always preferred women of this type. The point is, however, that women of the prostitute type or women of

the proletariat are the only women who will, as a rule, have anything to do with great men when, as in the case of Wagner, Heine, Van Gogh and Rodin, their beginnings are poor, inconspicuous and uncertain. These artists at the outset, like many hundreds of other great men, were unsuccessful. That is the important fact as far as the sexual side of their life is concerned. Unsuccessful men find it quite difficult enough to prevail upon women of their own station in life to associate with them, but to get them as wives is out of the question. This accounts for the fact that great men are so frequently thrown upon the company of courtesans and women of lower rank.

Woman has no primary interest in great or artistic man; she does not prefer him to a successful and rich soap-boiler, and, what is more, she never knows he is great until the world acknowledges him as such. In fact, she is not in the least concerned with refinement of interests or with cultivation of mind in her mate. She is only deeply fascinated by the great man and the artist when he is a material success. Otherwise, not only does his extra refinement and cultivation leave her indifferent, but his very poverty repels her.

Woman, by her very nature, is bound to take this attitude. She is compelled, therefore, to be vulgar. What is the rationale of her conduct?

It is obviously as follows. Woman, like the female butterfly, the female housefly or the female horsefly, has the very vital and useful instinct to deposit her eggs only there where there is a sound promise of food, and ample quantities of it, for the support of the larvae that are to be reared from them. To consider other matters here would obviously imperil not so much the mother herself as her future offspring. Aesthetic considerations must therefore be barred. It is not the best-looking repository, or the most refined, or the most learned, or the most artistic, that is sought, but that repository which promises the richest food-supply for the coming brood. In the insect it is the leafy tree, the towering dung-heap; in the human female it is the man who shows some substantial promise of being able to support the family that will come, and support it, moreover, in circumstances similar to those in which the wife herself has been reared. Thus the struggling artist, the struggling scientist and the ambitious but penniless politician, though each may be a genius in his way, repels the true and normal woman of his own class. Their spiritual gifts count as nothing, and since woman has no flair for greatness, and cannot with certainty pick out the great man before

the world has applauded him to the echo, it is only when they have become a material success that the female of their own or a superior station in life will look at them.

Now, this is obviously a very useful and a very vital instinct in woman. From the standpoint of the species nothing could be more laudable than this anxious preoccupation with the future of the offspring. But it amounts to this: that by their nature women can have no primary concern about those things that bear the hallmarks of cultivation, of refinement and of greatness, and that, therefore, they are essentially vulgar.

If in the Europe of today, and in all countries like Europe, it is material success alone that is regarded as of the highest value, and if money is the principal hallmark of power and prestige, it is due to the ascendancy of women in our midst. Women cannot take any other point of view, and where their influence tends to prevail, as it does particularly in England and America, there you will find the worship of cash the principal religion of the community. It is true that women fall at the feet of great men and artists when they become famous. When I was private secretary to Auguste Rodin, the great sculptor, at a time when he was making anything from fifteen to twenty thousand pounds a year, women were his principal visitors. They flocked to his studio and to his private house at Meudon as to an Oxford Street drapery sale. But as he used to say, they left him in peace in his dirty little studio in La Rue des Fourneaux at the time when he was poor and struggling.

It is indeed one of the most pernicious results of woman’s ascendancy in any society that this vulgar pursuit of mere material success (because it provides the surest provision for the offspring) tends to become general, and it is a sign of woman’s subordination in the Hindu community, for instance, that there the most respected caste is the poorest caste.

Today this vulgarity can be detected in every aspect of our lives. Everything, every consideration of refinement, is overlooked, provided that money be present. And the man who kills most female hearts is he who can throw a rich fur round his capture and whirl her off in a sumptuous Rolls-Royce. This to the normal decent woman is simply irresistible. She will abandon any mere artist for this experience. And though in later years, when the latter has become great in a worldly sense, she may deplore her

error of judgement, she has no gifts that enable her immediately to gauge his worth and thus to foretell his ultimate position.

It is interesting to note that neither Heine, Nietzsche nor Van Gogh ever became a material success until long after his death. But Heine, Nietzsche and Van Gogh were singularly free from the sort of female persecution that harassed Rodin and Wagner in later life, and certainly not one of them ever had a successful association with a woman of his own station or class.

Indeed, so deeply rooted is this love of material success in women that it manifests itself in those who have long ceased to be able to bear children. Thus wives who have passionately loved their husbands will learn to dislike and despise them intensely if owing to some unhappy turn in their fortunes they become material failures. Daughters will also manifest a pronounced dislike towards fathers who, for their station in life, have been inadequate material successes. I once heard a daughter of a peer talk most bitterly about her father because he was a failure from the financial point of view. A woman will forgive anything in her man—adultery, cruelty, obesity and stupidity—but she cannot and will not forgive material failure.

The ramifications of this fundamental and vital vulgarity in women are, of course, manifold. We have only to think of the ostentation of wealth, of the insistence upon the insignia of wealth and material success by women (diamonds, pearls, furs, fine external domestic appointments, etc.), and of the stampede for wealth and success in modern, women-ridden society. We have only to think of the commercial, industrial and financial immorality of modern societies, all of which are the direct outcome of the maniacal struggle for that hallmark which alone means power and prestige in an effeminate community. Individually, this vulgarity ramifies in woman as an inability to pursue refinement, unassisted or undirected; as a readiness to sacrifice refinement or else the fruits of cultivation, to any other sordid end, and as an inaccessibility to the finer nuances of thought. That is why the notion ‘lady’ is such absurd nonsense. It is the grossest and most palpable fiction. No ‘lady’ has ever existed or will ever exist. As Napoleon said, ‘women have no rank’; we have seen why this must be so.

No. 4. Woman’s love of petty power is obvious and hardly requires demonstrating. It arises from the species’ urgent need of some adult animal which, when the offspring is born, will take an instinctive delight in looking after it. Apart from the pleasant sensations that the healthy female, whether

animal or human, derives from suckling, there must also be an instinct which makes it a pleasure to nurse, to fondle and to tend the infant of the species. This instinct can be examined under its two aspects, either as a love of petty power or as a love of dealing with something pathetically helpless. And, indeed, if some of the deepest chords in the female's being were not moved by helplessness, where on earth should we be? What would become of our babies and our children?

As far as her relation to the child is concerned, therefore, there can be no doubt whatsoever concerning the utility to the species of woman's love of petty power, and away from the child it is revealed in a hundred different ways: woman's pronounced preference for lapdogs, her fondness for teaching (when children play at school it is invariably a little girl of the party who plays the part of teacher), her conscious preference for the grown-up schoolboy as a husband (that is to say, the man who is easily led by the nose), her tendency to desire to give advice to relatives and friends, in everything, so that virtually she directs their lives (this is admirably depicted by George Eliot in her descriptions of Maggie's aunts in *The Mill on the Floss*), and finally her tendency to excessive self-assertion and to interference with other people's concerns.

It is only in its ramifications that this vital instinct in woman has a deleterious influence if it is not kept in check, for her desire for petty power is always out of all proportion to her capacity for wielding any power whatsoever. For instance, in its tendency to make her favour the grown-up schoolboy type of man as a husband, it acts as a distinct drawback to the race. Because, although he proves an easy man to rule, he is by no means a desirable type from the standpoint of virile virtue. He is the type called 'Promethean' in [on p. 52 of this anthology]—that is to say, a man who has no mastery of life, very little depth or understanding, and who is gifted with the qualities of the lackey rather than of the leader. The prevalence of this type of man today, together with the paucity of men of the masculine and leader type, is another sign of the extent to which women are having their own way. He is a man who knows nothing about women, but he is usually athletic, breezy and fond of games—i.e., he is harmless. The fact that he now stands as the pattern of the 'manly' man reveals the influence of the female standpoint in our modern communities, as does the fact that the other type of man (the masculine and manly type who understands woman, and who shows that he does) is now vilified everywhere as the 'prig'.

Truth to tell, woman is less happy with the grown-up schoolboy type than with the latter type, but this she only finds out later. Her conscious choice, supported by the values of the age, inclines her to the type over which she can exercise petty power, and this man, who believes in ‘chivalry’, who believes in playing ‘cricket’ (or ‘playing the game’) with his womenfolk, and who accepts the whole of the tinsel of false sentiment that women have succeeded in drawing over the natural relations of the sexes, has become the beau ideal of Anglo-Saxon society.

Ultimately, of course, woman suffers excruciatingly, not only as an individual, but also as a whole sex, when this type of man becomes supreme, because, since he has no mastery over life and no understanding of life’s problems (the sex problem is only one of the many he creates), the societies in which he prevails gradually get into such an appalling muddle, and reveal in all their aspects such a tragic absence of the master-mind, that life in all its departments becomes ever more and more difficult. A century in England of the prevalence of this type of man has brought us to our present hopeless plight, and yet there are very few men, and no women, who seem to be aware of the fact that it is the prevalence of this alleged ‘manly’ man that is to blame.

A moment’s thought, of course, reveals at once how ridiculous even the terminology of this womanly ideal of man really is, for truly manly men are not ruled by their women. And yet, in the most successful novels of the day, in the most exalted circles of the land and in the hearts of all unsuspecting virgins, he continues to be upheld as the paragon for all times and climes.

This is what we have had to pay for woman’s point of view becoming paramount.

Do not let it be thought, however, that the cure would consist in curbing, uprooting or correcting woman’s love of petty power. This should not be attempted for one instant, even if it were possible. Woman’s love of petty power is much too valuable to the species to be tampered with. The only practical cure would be the breeding of a type of masculine men over whom woman’s love of petty power could not avail.

Thus, woman’s lack of taste on the one hand, her vulgarity and her love of petty power on the other, are all seen to be exercising a deleterious and dangerous influence on modern society. They are harmful because they exert a continuous pull downwards against the aspiring efforts of the age;

they are dangerous because they may lead to a degree of degeneration from which it may prove impossible ultimately to recover, and they are difficult and delicate to handle because, while they are persistent and incorrigible, they are, as we have seen, too vital to be tampered with without jeopardizing the survival of the species.

What in the circumstances is the solution?

The only advisable solution lies in the direction not of changing woman—that would be suicidal to the species—but in limiting her power, in controlling her influence. Feminism, therefore, which aims at the opposite ideal, is wrong—wrong to the root. There must be a revulsion of feeling, or we perish. Woman must be redefined. Her sphere must once again be delimited and circumscribed, if her vital and precious instincts are not, in their effort to extend out of bounds, to drag us steadily down into the abyss.

If woman were happier as she is, than with her influence controlled, if feminism had brought bliss instead of anguish to millions of women, there might be at least one remaining argument—a purely hedonistic one—in favour of this nineteenth-century madness. But seeing that this is not so, in view of what everyone now knows and can see and feel with his own unassisted senses, that woman has grown every day more wretched, more neurotic and more sick with every advance that feminism has made, the last and only possible word remaining in its favour, the plea even of hedonism, is shown to be as inadmissible as the rest.

When, therefore, we read in the old canon of the Brahmins, ‘He who carefully guards his wife, preserves the purity of his offspring, virtuous conduct, his family, himself and his means of acquiring merit’; when we read, ‘Day and night women must be kept in dependence by the males of their families … her father protects her in childhood, her husband protects her in youth, and her sons protect her in old age, a woman is never fit for independence’, we shall surely be taking a very heavy onus of responsibility upon our shoulders if we declare this policy madness and our own wisdom. Is there anything beyond our own prejudice to show that we are more wise than the Brahmins were? Is there anything in the organization of our society to show that it is more successful than that of the Brahmins? If we choose to interpret these texts merely as the unjust doctrines of a race ‘hostile’ to women, it should be incumbent upon us to prove that, in point of fact, our women are happier in their anarchy than those women are or

were in their Brahministic order. But, truth to tell, the Brahmins were a very wise race, a race that meant to last longer than we mean to last, and which, in fact, has achieved a degree of permanence far exceeding that which any European race has achieved, or can hope to achieve, unless it make a rapid volte-face in almost all its most cherished beliefs.

No. 5. Woman's vanity, I take it, is not open to question. If no other proof of its preeminence in her were available, we should find one in her universally reported modesty, for who says modest, says also vain. Since, therefore, no-one has yet contested the modesty of women, I may take it that her vanity is by implication generally accepted too.

The ramifications of this vice in her are to be found in her tendency to inordinate jealousy (which arises from her incessant desire to be the centre of attraction and her intolerance of rivals in this desire); in her love of honours, titles, badges, etc. (hence her incessant spurring-on of her mate to obtain them, and her impatience with him if he fails); in her tendency to adopt only showy or conspicuous callings in which tangible and visible results, and speedy applause, are sure to be obtained;[17] finally, in her constant and deep concern about her appearance, her clothes, her hair, and her neighbour's clothes and hair, and her love of flattery. This latter derivative of her basic vanity is perhaps the worst of all, because it means that women, as a rule, are always governed in their likes and dislikes, and in their appreciation of their fellow-creatures, not by a recognition of the latter's intrinsic worth, which they sum up once and for all, but by the manner in which their fellow-creatures treat them. A woman does not ask herself, what is the precise character of So-and-so, and value him accordingly. Her instinctive question is, how did So-and-so treat me? He may be an inferior man who dances attendance upon her and treats her well, he may be a knave; she will always prefer him before the worthy man who treats her with indifference. Madame de Staël's adverse opinion of Napoleon was not formed until Napoleon had systematically and thoroughly snubbed her. But Madame de Staël's adverse opinion of Napoleon is not valuable as an index to Napoleon's true character; it is only valuable as an index to the way Napoleon treated her. Likewise with our 'good Queen Bess', it was not Leicester's desirable qualities that so much endeared him to her, for he was a bigamist, a murderer, an incompetent and cowardly general, and a bad governor of men, as his experiences in the Netherlands proved, but the fact that he was an arch-flatterer. Even the

ingenuity he displayed in designing his presents to his sovereign and lady-love reveal an unusual knowledge of woman's weaknesses. Elizabeth's treatment of Admiral Lord Seymour, whom she made a Privy Councillor, was also not based upon an estimate of his true worth but upon the way in which he treated her, for the man was a convicted defaulter …

The most cursory study of any woman's opinion about her fellow-creatures will always reveal the same fact: that they are not based at all upon the intrinsic value of people, but on the way people treat her. This is a comparatively harmless trait so long as woman has no power; the moment, however, that she is placed in a position of wielding power, her errors of judgement affect public life, and she only accepts those men as her ministers, advisers or directors who can prostrate themselves with the best grace at her feet, and appeal most irresistibly to her vanity. Her choice of a fellow-creature may of course be right by a fluke, as for instance when he combines with general ability the power for fulsome flattery (Benjamin Disraeli), but otherwise it is almost sure to be wrong.

These ramifications of the fundamental vice of vanity in woman are, I presume, disputed by no-one. It only remains, therefore, to show that here again we are concerned with a vital instinct which, while it may require curbing by man, is too precious to be uprooted or suppressed. For what, after all, is this vanity in woman but the outcome of her natural impulse to attract the notice of the male—to speed up, that is to say, or to make certain of, the act of fertilization, which can only be consummated when a male has been captivated? If the female played the aggressive and prehensile role in the sexual act, she would only need to pursue and to overpower as the male does. Since, however, she plays the passive, receptive and submissive role, her only means of securing and expediting fertilization is to draw the male to her, and this instinct in the human female naturally manifests itself as a deep concern about her own personal appearance and its powers of provoking flattering attention. If intellectual brightness can add to the power she is thus able to exercise, and she has the gift for developing intellectual power, she will do so in order to add to the glamour of her person. That is why it is never safe to argue from a woman's intellectual pursuits that she is truly interested in the subjects she is studying. It is far wiser to wait until she has given some unmistakable proof of the purity of her motives. This, however, rarely if ever happens.

Since, however, in a contest between attractions, native beauty and native endowments generally play a greater part than dress or acquired intellectual smartness, it will generally be found that women are more bitterly jealous of each other's bodily gifts than of each other's wardrobes, wealth or wisdom. But woman does not consciously consider the benefit of the species, although she is constantly working for it. Thus when she is vying with other women in the business of attraction, she realizes the enormous advantage enjoyed by the rival who has the best physical endowments, and since it is her own fertilization that is alone important to her, her jealousy of the other woman or women may quite easily drive her to homicide, if she can hope to achieve a speedier triumph by this means.

Apart from sexual matters, this characteristic in the female manifests itself generally as a desire to shine or to outshine, and to be the centre of an admiring or at least attentive group. Tiresome as this propensity is, particularly when a wife shows it to a marked degree, it should never be forgotten that it has a vital origin, and therefore that it should be treated with patience and toleration. A little kindly and timely explanation to a woman of one's own circle will generally enable her to realize how foolish she has been making herself appear, and the moment she realizes this and begins, with the aid of your explanation, to notice the self-assertiveness of other women, and its reasons, she will be on the high road to understanding the wisdom of your rebuke.

As a general rule it is best to teach women through the example of other women, because their natural loathing and contempt of other women is such that if you can once convince your wife or your daughter that she is behaving, or has behaved, like a certain other woman, whom she has had opportunities of observing with disapproval, the chances are that you will have cured her spontaneously of the objectionable trait which it was your desire to suppress.

This fact, however, should be carefully noted in regard to female vanity, and that is that normally it is only a means of luring the male. When once the male has been lured, and the woman is passionate and positive, vanity is flung to the four winds and passion will induce the woman to accept even insults from the man she loves without ceasing from loving him. The negative woman, on the other hand, whose vanity is never smothered by passion, cannot accept an insult from anyone. She hates the lover who does not keep up to the mark in worshipping her. Since she is never carried away

by passion, she never forgets to ask herself the constant question, what sort of figure she is cutting in the affair, and this makes her very sensitive to adulation, neglect and insults.

No. 6. Woman's sensuality will be stoutly denied, not only by women themselves, but by all sentimental and women-ridden men. Owing to the lies told by the writers of the J.S. Mill type, most modern Anglo-Saxons have got it into their heads that woman has acted as a moralizing influence on man, and has thus led to a curbing and taming of the sensual impulses of humanity; in fact, that civilization is largely her work. With such false doctrines in their minds, it is naturally difficult to convince such people that woman is sensual, for with cerulean-eyed innocence they exclaim, 'How can sensuality moralize mankind?' True enough, it cannot, but the mistake is to suppose anything so fatuous and absurd as that women ever advanced morality by a hair's-breadth. I think I have shown sufficiently cogently that when they do exercise any influence out of their proper bounds it is only in order to spread their bad taste and their vulgarity. How then could their effect on humanity's civilization and cultivation have been anything but a retarding one? The truth is that woman's direct influence in most civilizations has been but small, and where this direct influence has been felt, whether acutely or insignificantly, it is always unfavourable.

But let us not suppose that on that account sensuality is an evil. On the contrary, it is one of the greatest mainstays of life. Without sensuality we could not advance from one generation to another; without a love of the flesh and its joys human nature and the animal creation would come to an end in half a century. In this sense, seeing that today we are all puritans—if not in deed, at least in thought—I have the best possible proof of how little woman has influenced civilization for the good. For woman is chiefly sensual. If then she had influenced civilization for the good, she must have checked puritanism. Because even if we admit, as we must, that her sensuality must be kept within proper bounds by man, we are forced to inquire how it is that the whole of western Europe, and all countries like it, are puritan today, if woman has exercised any influence on the evolution of society, and that influence has been a good influence.

The reader may reply that this proves that woman is *not* sensual. But I invite him to consider the process of bearing and rearing children. Surely it is from start to finish, from the coitus to the weaning, a sensuous process, and in that sense woman's sensuality is entirely laudable. When once this

sensuous process ceases from being pleasant in all its stages, disease is present and the species is in danger of extermination. This danger may be remote, but it must be recognized. Now, how can we expect a creature to find pleasure in a sensuous process lasting over such a long period of time unless sensuality plays a great part in her constitution?

The only point we have to settle here (since we have placed sensuality among woman's vices) is at what point does her sensuality become vicious. Now, let it be thoroughly understood that two-thirds of our middle class and certainly three-quarters of our wealthiest classes can hardly produce a positive woman among them, and, therefore, that there can be no question of sensuality in the women of these sections of the community. To be sensual a woman must at least be positive; she must at least have healthy and tonic organs, both of alimentation, etc., and of sex; hence we shall not be thinking of the bulk of British women when we proceed to show how the natural and laudable sensuality of the positive woman becomes a vice.

Like all the other vital qualities of woman—her tastelessness, her vulgarity, her love of petty power and her vanity—sensuality only becomes a vice when it is out of hand. It is therefore in greatest danger of becoming a vice when men have conceded overmuch liberty to their womenfolk, and where woman, by having her own way, can indulge her proclivities without limitation. But this is the state in which we find ourselves in England today, and if it were not for the fact that three-quarters of our women are negative (that is to say, too unhealthy and too atonic in their alimentary, sexual and other organs to derive any pleasure from their functions), sensuality would be one of the worst vices of the times.

How does it operate harmfully when once it has become a vice through positive women having their own way? It operates as a vice by breaking up the family unit, by unduly exhausting the menfolk of the nation, by leading to promiscuity and thence to disease, by making woman the only subject whether of agreement or disagreement among men, and by elevating to the first place among the virtues a caprine degree of masculine potency.

The way of arresting this vice, however, is not, as our ancestors of the seventeenth century thought (and did), to eradicate woman's sensuality and to make her negative, for that is tantamount to destroying a portion of her vitality and of her valuable vital impulses. The only remedy, here again, is to circumscribe woman's powers and to place each woman under the

tutelage of some responsible man. But in order to do this successfully you must have the men who can undertake the charge. Besides, is it not too late to speak of this now? Has not the wrong remedy, the rearing of negative and non-sexual women, gone too far? I doubt whether, in view of humanity's infinite possibilities, anything could have gone too far. But the revulsion of feeling that would be required to alter our present condition in suchwise as (1) to rear a majority of positive women once more, and (2) to rear the men who could take charge of them and account for their actions, appears, as things are, to be so remote that, although everything is possible, it is doubtful whether precisely this thing is probable.

Certainly the choice taken by our ancestors cannot have been the right one. It cannot be right to suppress a vice by eradicating or detoning the vital principle that causes it; and now that we have the fruits of this method about us, in our millions of negative women, it may reasonably be asked whether we do not see the necessity of starting a counter-movement which, while it will increase the proportion of positive women in our midst, will also and concurrently rear the men who can take charge of them.

'Day and night woman must be kept in dependence by the males of their families', says Manu, 'and if they attach themselves to sensual enjoyments, they must be kept under one's control'. (*Woman: A Vindication*, pp. 300–44)

Woman, at her best, has been revealed a creature who, without exaggeration or fulsomeness, may be called the custodian and promoter of life. If that is the role in which she is at her best, it therefore follows that in any other role she undertakes she will display her second best, or her subordinate, side …

A priori, without examining the evidence for or against our contention, we should expect to find that in art, philosophy and science, which are pursuits exacting qualities frequently antagonistic to the natural prerequisites of woman's role as a custodian and promoter of life, woman can at best only make an inferior display, even if she make any display at all …

In science and philosophy, says Havelock Ellis, 'it is not simply that women are more ready than men to accept what is already accepted and what is most in accordance with appearance—and that it is inconceivable, for instance, that a woman should have devised the Copernican system—

but they are less able than men to stand alone'. Whether we turn to metaphysics, epistemology and the other departments of abstract thought, astronomy, physics or mechanics; whether we turn to medicine, chemistry, philology, geology, physiology or any other of the more modern sciences, or whether we turn to architecture, sculpture, poetry or painting, the names that really count, the figures that are milestones in the history of these human pursuits—and this is the ultimate criterion—are all names of male performers. There should be no need to elaborate this point. Anyone acquainted even slightly with the history of any art or science is in a position to accept it without demur. Think what we embrace in the subjects mentioned when we pronounce the names of Aristotle, Bacon, Hobbes, Kant, Nietzsche, Copernicus, Galileo, Newton, Harvey, Pasteur, Lyell, Grimm, Pheidias, Michelangelo, Titian! …

Apart from woman's natural lack of originality, and her absence of initiative, or of that spirit of bold and confident conviction—all of which derive from her necessary role in the relation of the sexes—her indifference to truth is what chiefly incapacitates her for scientific pursuits, as it does for all undertakings where truthfulness is of preeminent importance, while her constant subjection to her emotions makes her an untrustworthy judge of all those facts or questions to which she may be inclined to bear an emotional relation.

Anyone who has an extensive knowledge of women, even of the most cultivated among them, is aware of how constantly they are guided in their conclusions concerning what is true by hedonistic considerations. Indeed, it is the most difficult thing to persuade a woman even of the most obvious truth, if that truth strikes her as being too unpleasant to be comfortably assimilated to her previous stock of knowledge. In addition to her vital indifference to truth, therefore, woman's emotions add a further disability to her nature in this department. Her convictions are so intimately and unconsciously interwoven with her deepest interests and long-cherished beliefs that if, to accept a certain truth, these convictions have to be outraged, she prefers to reject that truth as unacceptable. In this sense, woman's thinking is largely feeling and her thoughts are largely sensations. The more emphatic and stubborn a woman is in any belief, the more strongly you may suspect that she has not facts but emotional reasons for holding it. That is why women are so notoriously bad at giving reasons for

their opinions, and why they are so untrustworthy as judges of matters of fact, where impartiality is a prerequisite …

It is enormously difficult for a woman to divorce her wishes, her likes and dislikes, from her beliefs and from her conclusions, and this, in addition to her natural indifference to the truth and her lack of originality, is enough to explain the fundamental unsuitability of her sex for any scientific pursuit. (*Woman: A Vindication*, pp. 346–53)

Male Psychology

The physical consequences of the inequality in the cost [of reproduction] to the man:

> (1) Fewer tolls on his physical resources. No ineluctable loss like that of menstruation. Higher and longer development.
>
> (2) A very much shorter sexual cycle. Consequently, if it is desirable for the sake of the coming generation that he should not approach his mate after fertilization, a great intolerance of monogamy.
>
> (3) Greater freedom. Man is not tied down to the beloved parasite[18] and need not spend much of his lifetime in associating with it.
>
> (4) Greater agility and wieldiness of body, owing to narrower pelvis, shorter trunk, longer legs. We might add greater sustaining power and stronger muscles. (The greater bodily agility, like all bodily qualities, finds its counterpart in greater agility of mind.) It is interesting to note in this respect that only once in its history has the Derby been won by a mare. At least, so I have been informed.
>
> (5) Slower and later aging, which leaves a longer freshness of mind and body and enabled some men, like Goethe, Gladstone, Bismarck, Bernadotte, Cardinal Fleury, Dufaure, Thiers, Rémusat, Guizot, Titian, Corot, Bonnat, Cervantes, etc., only to abdicate with their life their freshness and combativeness. (*Man: An Indictment*, p. 36)

The mental consequences of the inequality in the cost [of reproduction] to men:

> (1) The possibility of attaining to genius, as also to the lowest depths of depravity and stupidity. (Idiots are more common in men than women.)
>
> (2) and (3) The freedom to apply all available energy to one task, to one cause and one object. Greater powers of application, concentration and endurance than woman. Thus, in art, greater success in

maintaining the strength of the inspiration against the obstructive difficulties of form. In science, as in all effort, greater success in surviving long periods of no apparent or no appreciable success.

(4) The inclusion and comprehension of woman (except among effeminate or degenerate men) which, with the understanding of his fellow-men, leads man to a greater capacity for realistic conceptions about man, woman, the child and life. Romanticism and idealization, in so far as they are distortions either of man's or woman's nature, are a sign that the male who is guilty of them approximates to the sick or degenerate type. (*Man: An Indictment*, pp. 38–9)

The mental consequences of the functional differences [of sex] to men:

(1) For the mental consequences of the difference in his role in copulation see [Sex Roles, on p. 79]. (As the coitus constitutes man's only part in reproduction, and this part has probably not changed very materially in the male since the time of the warm-blooded ancestors in the mammalia, man is, in the mental consequences of his role in reproduction, much less differentiated from his earlier ancestors among sexually dimorphic animals than is the mammalian female, woman. Thus he is essentially the senior of the two.)

(2) The mental consequences of the part of protector and ruler of the family or horde, a part which we already see played by the male monkeys and the male apes, are combativeness, bravery, heroism in battle, intolerance of other males and particularly a tendency to be jealous of younger males. (We have seen that in monkeys this jealousy of younger males is a salient characteristic of the same sex, and in man it is just as pronounced, although man successfully conceals it, at least in civilized communities, where it usually manifests itself in the form of puritanical constraints upon the young.) Again here, as under (1) above, leadership, with all that it means in responsibility, is a fondness for exercising protective rights and, in the habit of expecting and commanding obedience, becomes a prominent characteristic.

(3) The mental consequences of the very much shorter sexual cycle in man, with its smaller drains upon his physical resources, has, as we have seen, consisted in giving him greater freedom thoroughly to acquire expertness and mastery in almost any undertaking. The absence of the beloved parasite from man's life (except as an indirect burden), added to the fact of his higher development, thus gives him an

advantage to which his unquestionably greater achievements in every field must be ascribed.

(4) The mental consequences of the greater freedom resulting from man's functional difference also manifests itself in his nature as independence and self-reliance, and endows him with that pioneer spirit which … in the sciences, the arts and the task of world-mastery, exploration and exploitation causes him to be an innovator, a discoverer and inventor.

(5) Finally, owing to man's ability to turn away both from woman and child, and to concentrate all his power on contemplation and meditation, and all his genius on searching the meaning of the mysteries that surround him, he is not only the truly artistic and scientific sex, but also the sex from which all religiousness and religions ultimately derive. The pursuit of science issued from man's stubborn endeavour to solve the mystery of his environment, and though much can be conceded to woman in the nature of magical and divinatory powers, not only is she surpassed in both these fields by man, but she is also nowhere on a level of equality with him in religion. (*Man: An Indictment*, pp. 39–41)

Love and Marriage

The negative man and woman, like the invalid or the eccentric, must remain an enigma, because natural laws and forces no longer operate normally or calculably in them. Nevertheless, it is possible in a rough way to outline certain features which are more or less common even to subnormal people and from which, therefore, certain general rules of conduct may be inferred.

For instance, we may say of negative men and women that:

(a) The physiological promptings of an instinctive and organic kind are never likely (as with their healthier brethren) to weigh very heavily with them. (The ethereal lovers who believe that marriage is a union of souls.)

(b) The sentimental and intellectual aspects of a sexual situation are more likely to determine their conduct than its vital or reproductive aspects. (The lovers in most modern novels, in which 'luvv' is supposed never to have bodily union as its aim, but only companionship, or sweet words, or pure affection, or a life of 'unselfish' mutual service, or some other high-falutin' nonsense.)

(c) The force of passion being no longer the ruling determinant in them, such factors as vanity, caution, cowardice and even indolence may dominate the sex impulses and direct conduct to their own ends. (The bulk of hasty marriages made during the [First World] War were of this nature, vanity both in the man and the woman giving rise in each individual to such elated feelings that these were mistaken for depth of passion.)

(d) The intellectual attitude towards love, and the passions which it tends to assume, may cause negative people to imitate without feeling the behaviour of their more passionate fellows and their love affairs, thus producing a false but fairly accurate image of true passion. (The actors in modern society, all of which are by no means professional histrions.)

Dealing with (a) first, it must be fairly obvious that where physiological promptings are feeble, deep bodily disappointments, and particularly rebuffs to the reproductive system of the women, can be tolerated very much more placidly than where physiological promptings are imperious.

Thus all negative women are likely to endure for a very much longer period a childless marriage, or a marriage in which childbirth has ceased in the first four to six years, than are their positive sisters. In all ‘happy’ marriages of this kind, therefore, which have only terminated with the demise of one of the parties, negativeness may certainly be suspected in the woman and, since like tends to attract like, also in the man.

When, therefore, unhappiness supervenes in such a home, other causes must be sought than the secret and unconscious revolt of the woman’s reproductive equipment, or the man’s fiery need for sexual variety.

Negativeness being the outcome of an atonic condition of the body, or at least of the genital organs, and negative women being less likely to function properly than their more positive sisters, there will naturally arise a tendency in all such matches (owing to the small amount of pleasure and gratification that is derived from the whole of the physical side of marriage and motherhood) to discount the physiological side and to exalt only states of the soul and the mind. These people will have the old maids of all puritanical communities with them when they cast scorn upon the pleasures of the body, and, as their number is increasing daily, the chorus of body-despisers grows steadily louder and louder in all the countries enjoying Western civilization.

The women in these matches are likely to confound motherhood with self-sacrifice and martyrdom, and their husbands to confound the birth of a child with the threat of financial ruin. Science, costly and inefficient science, helps them at every step, and when finally childbirth stops, which is never too soon (for the women in any case), and nurses and perambulators take their leave, science remains to the last to try to repair or neutralize the debility that unwelcome fertility has left behind.

In their most private moments the women of such matches speak of the ‘horrible sensuality’ of men and of the havoc this sensuality has made of their lives, and in thought and action they incline to everything that emphasizes the soulful or spiritual side of life. They cultivate a taste for extremely soulful literature or poetry (Maeterlinck’s *Serres Chaudes*, for instance) and tend to gravitate towards those forms of Christianity that are most quintessential.

Divorce, if it is ever resorted to by such couples, is usually the fault of the husbands. They may at length manifest a desire to have a breath of air untainted by sickness or debility, and in that case usually become entangled with a woman quite as negative as their wife. The women hardly ever go further than to cultivate an apparently ardent but platonic attachment to some poet, musician or other artist, to whom they write long soulful letters, full of hints about a non-physical kind of bliss in love which they have longed all their lives to experience. But in a large majority of cases, negative couples of precisely this kind tend to finish their days more or less tiresomely together, each bewailing the fact that such a white elephant as the body ever became associated with the more ‘exalted’ spiritual side of man.

In regard to (b), it can only be said that the type is so very prevalent that it is becoming almost the norm of modern civilization. Its principal characteristic is that both the male and female tend to choose each other for reasons which are as remote as possible from the body. The men of this type choose ‘clever’, ‘artistic’, sylph-like, narrow-hipped ‘sweet’ women, with thin slender hands, spiritual interests and probably a history of some intestinal irregularity in their past. The women, while aspiring to a high ideal of health and manliness in their mates, have not the instinct to pick out the passionate man, but usually select one who, though he may be big of body and limb, intellectual and breezy, is quite fireless, unpassionate and dull.

The couples belonging to this type can also endure childlessness or a cessation of childbirth with almost perfect equanimity, the man being very much more concerned about the figure he is cutting as a chivalrous, sporting mate who observes the rules of ‘cricket’ with his spouse than about any other aspect of their married life. He studies with asinine perplexity the so-called inscrutable complexities of his wife’s mind, and is always making ‘allowances’ and preaching the doctrine of give and take. His great charm, according to modern values, is the fact that he regards women as utterly incomprehensible. Women are so powerful nowadays in determining opinion, and have so often and so emphatically called the men who show some insight into women’s nature ‘prigs’, that at the present day both women and men unanimously call any man who voices penetrating views about woman an out-and-out prig. In fact, in order to be a prig it is necessary to have shown some ability in analyzing the true nature of woman.

The women in such unions very frequently outstrip their male companions in mental nimbleness, and this disturbance of the proper balance frequently leads them, in their vague discontent, to become prominent exponents and defenders of all those claims of sex equality and sex-levelling which have agitated the home life of northern European countries (where most negative people are to be found) for the last hundred years. The spectacle of their ladylike and unobtrusive male, there can be no doubt, is usually the first incentive towards these kinds of activities, and, seeing that they have the constant substantiation of their claims in the tame animal with whom they cohabit, it is not surprising that they frequently enter into ‘woman’s cause’ with a conviction and a fervour very much more intense than the more academic enthusiasm of the old maid who is usually their associate in the movement.

Indeed, it not infrequently happens that the ‘male’ of these militant women is himself an active collaborator in his wife’s public work, and so complete is their intellectual and sentimental agreement on the question that he will echo her words with the docility of a parrot.

The type (c) is also common enough and is growing more plentiful in all classes of society. It is the negative type which approximates most to the passionate, tragic type of real life and fiction because, while it possesses no deep passions, its extreme vanity makes it capable of the wildest excess.

In all the possible situations of married life this type never consults any other arbiter than vanity, and it is only when its caution, cowardice or indolence can overpower its vanity that the latter does not decide the issue.

Having no real deep passion to direct them, the men and women of this type are actually drawn into marriage in the first place solely from motives of vanity, because the state of being betrothed is a state of (1) supreme importance, (2) conspicuousness, (3) intense and unscrupulous mutual worship, and (4) romantic glamour.

Their marriage is likely to be the least stable of all marriages among negative people, however, for the moment their vanity ceases to be fed, or humoured, they are likely to weary on an association that affords them ever less and less of the joys of their engaged days. Lacking the sound physiological promptings which make a fully adapted life sufficient for their happiness and serenity, they become restless the moment (1) adulation declines from the quarter of their spouse, (2) the attention of their world ceases from being concentrated upon them, and (3) that feeling of exaltation which filled their breast during courtship, and particularly on their wedding day, shows signs of waning.

The woman in this kind of match finds out soon after marriage that, while she has become the mistress of her own home, she is living in an atmosphere which, compared with that she had grown accustomed to in the days when her matchmaking mother directed her life, and during the months or years of her courtship, is depressingly deficient in appeals to her vanity.

Her husband is securely bound to her by law. His first raptures are over, and the two seem to be settling down to a humdrum existence in which those deep thrills of yore seem entirely to have gone from her life. But precisely those thrills were the breath of her nostrils. All the joys of marital intimacy with the man she ‘loves’ do not make up for the loss of that. Her body is not tonic or vital enough to provide any comfort for the exaltation her vanity once afforded her.

She therefore contrives so to modify her humdrum existence as to restore to it some of the atmosphere of her late adolescence and the days of her courtship. She goes in search of company, she insists on men coming to the house. She sings or acts or goes in for sports, all with a view to restoring that atmosphere in which she became engaged. In the end, she easily finds

some idiot of a man who will be ignorant and vain enough to court her, and when this happens she will at last breathe deeply again.

These courtships which the vain negative woman contrives to bring about, in order to feed her vanity, may or may not lead to adultery. Frequently they do, because, although she is certainly not actuated by passion in contriving them, she may by chance light upon a paramour who is passionate and then in order to prolong the farce she finds she must yield to his importunacies. Indeed, unless she do yield, the whole of the realistic nature of the love affair, which she has done her best to impart to the experience, will be destroyed. Thus, despite her lack of real passion, this kind of vain adulteress frequently finds herself in the divorce court with the most damning evidence against her, when all the time she has never desired the illicit consummation. What was necessary—nay, essential—to her was the breath of adulation, not the final embrace of the procreator. She wanted a life that was a long courtship, because courtship is the time when vanity receives its strongest appeals. As, however, she could hardly simulate *une grande passion* without actually appearing desirous of the consummation, her first marriage is ruined.

Very frequently indeed these women do not allow the consummating step to be taken. Not being at all disposed to it physically, their caution, their cowardice and their indolence easily get the upper hand and they ultimately disappoint their expectant lover, but as a rule this happens only when they have squeezed him dry of every possible flattering epithet and attention.

But, the reader will object, as far as behaviour and results are concerned, where is the difference here between the negative woman acting on the impulse of vanity and the positive woman acting on the impulse of passion?

To judge from the evidence heard in the divorce court, the difference is admittedly slight. There is the same dissatisfaction with the home and the mate, leading to the same longing for amusements and activities of all kinds which promise a chance of variety. In actual practice, however, the differences are marked. The positive woman goes about the business with more solemn, even sullen, determination. She does not smile, laugh and frivol about it as the negative woman does. The latter betrays her immediate aim, which is the satisfaction of vanity, by her extreme enjoyment of every step along her irregular path. She enjoys the mere means to an end, which supply the gratification that her vanity needs. The former, having only the

end in view, accepts the means as a necessary preliminary, but these means obviously leave her much more unmoved than they do her negative sister.

Thus negative women are notoriously what the French call *grimacières*. They proclaim their true nature by the perpetual grin that distorts their features throughout the whole period in which they receive attentions from their worshipper. Deep passion does not grin in this way. It is either too deeply stirred, or it is too shy, to make an open exhibition of its feelings. Besides, it is greatly agitated and anxious about the issue.

The vain, negative woman, moreover, is always conscious of an observing public when she is in the company of her admirer, and her triumphant glances at onlookers in such circumstances are a sort of challenge to them to contemplate her in the full intensity of her joy. Part of the gratification of her vanity consists in drawing the envious looks of other women upon her. Hence, too, her perpetual grin, a good deal of which is meant for public notice. The positive woman, on the other hand, is too deeply interested, too seriously concerned, to be able to give a thought to the onlookers. She may even shun the crowd. In her, everything is subordinated to the principal end she has in view.

The vain, negative woman, moreover, because she does not really desire the man who happens to be worshipping her, will brook no breach of manners, of chivalry, of steady worship from him. She is constantly on the alert and vigilant. She keeps him up to the mark, and will quickly rap his knuckles if the incense he is burning at the altar of her self-esteem is the least bit stale, or burns with only a moderate fury, or is swung with any sign of diminished zeal. The passionate woman, on the other hand, will bear anything from the man she really desires—except absence.

The vain woman’s hatred is roused not by a refusal to cohabit with her, but by a noticeable lameness in her worshipper’s flattering fluency. She hates those who wound her vanity, not those who cheat her will to life and its multiplication. She will become homicidal only if she is made to look small or ridiculous, not if she is left sterile. She loathes situations in which she cannot make a display of her bliss.

The positive woman, on the other hand, longs for privacy and secrecy, and forgives nothing less than a lack of virile ardour in her male pursuer. He may be silent to the point of dumbness, inarticulate to the point of being unable to apologize when he spills his soup over her dress at table—all

these things she overlooks if he has the first prerequisite of life, which is virile ardour rising to impatient and restless importunacy. On the other hand, the worshipper who spills his soup over his negative mistress's dress in a restaurant or any public assembly would thenceforward be loathed on that account alone. Because it is mortifying to one's vanity to be made ridiculous in public.

The negative man of this class is of the cold Don Juan type, who gratifies his vanity more than his sexual appetite by repeated conquests. He soon tires of his wife and of his home. He does this all the more readily, seeing that his marriage itself has usually been quite an unintended consummation on his part of one of the many flirtations his vanity led him into in early manhood, and that he has been chafing ever since it was finally settled at the thought of the many conquests he might have made before taking the final step.

His nostrils, too, yearn for the hot breath of adulation. He is a tormentor of positive women, because he can so readily hold himself aloof at the last station before the terminus.

If this man becomes unfaithful, it will be because his enormous vanity has overcome his caution. In order to extract the last and most enthralling confession from a young woman's heart, which will cause him to reach his highest pinnacle of exaltation, one day he will go too far, either in his protestations or in his caresses, and then, if he is dealing with the kind of girl or woman who knows of no facile retreat from such avowals and who is really in earnest, he will find himself impelled in a direction and to an end which he can truthfully swear he never had in contemplation at the outset.

The fact that the law of England deals too lightly with this kind of dandified scoundrel (for such men almost always dress well) is due not merely to the fact that, generally speaking, it is grotesquely lenient to co-respondents as a class, but also to its inability to distinguish between the adultery of the negative man and woman whose misdemeanour is the outcome of vanity alone, and whose ruin of another's home is therefore wanton and unnecessary, and the adultery which is the outcome of genuine passion and which therefore partakes far more of that quality of human action which is elemental and inevitable.

This man only becomes tragic under a snub. He finds no infinite resource in a deep knowledge of his own value, and is therefore incapable of self-

consolation when shown the cold shoulder. Hence the woman who does not fall in with his scheme of mutual worship incurs his homicidal loathing. She destroys his *joie de vivre,* his very *primum mobile,* the source of his will to live. His career is a series of escapes from female fires he has deliberately kindled, but he is always more ready to forgive a burn than the fuel that refuses to flare up under the power of his bellows.

Before concluding section (c), perhaps it would be advisable and also helpful to give a brief analysis of the psychological forces which impel the negative, vain man and woman along their career of vanity-gratification at all costs. For, while to understand them will be in a measure to exonerate them, it will also serve as a means of recognizing their type when we see it.

Now, the fundamental truth to be grasped about vanity is that it is always found in conjunction with modesty. It is the intense modesty of the vain person that forces him to gratify his vanity at every turn.

What, then, is modesty? In ultimate practice it amounts to an inability to set a value on oneself, an inability to place oneself according to one's worth in the graduated hierarchy of human beings. The modest man waits to be given his place, to be told where he stands, to be priced and valued by his fellow-men. Compliments mean a good deal to him because, since he has no settled opinion of himself, they promote his self-esteem. In short, his self-esteem fluctuates according to his receipts in compliments and abuse. And since his good spirits depend largely upon his self-esteem, his spirits may also be said to fluctuate according to these receipts. Unlike his proud brother, he does not hold a good or poor opinion of himself because of an inner conviction of his worth, which is settled: he holds it because he has been modest enough to wait for the world to give it to him.

But this makes him entirely dependent upon his fellow-men for his knowledge of his worth, and consequently for the condition of his spirits. By throwing him always upon the judgement of his fellows for his opinion of himself and his good spirits, his modesty therefore tends to lead the modest man into the constant practice of trying to seduce his fellow-men to such an opinion of himself as will not cause his spirits to suffer. He covets good opinions, because on them alone can his self-esteem, and therefore his good spirits, thrive. In order to enjoy that comfortable feeling of satisfaction which promoted self-esteem affords, he is constantly tempted to persuade his fellow-men into giving it to him. This makes him amenable and what

the modern world calls ‘lovable’, because he glows under compliments and becomes pliable and susceptible to influence, and by the side of him his proud inflexible brother appears to the modern world as cold and inaccessible.[19] The vain man asks, ‘What did So-and-so say of me?’ or ‘What did So-and-so think of me?’ And according to the answer he receives he is either happy or depressed.

The proud man does not care what So-and-so thinks of him. He is not concerned with public opinion. He knows his own good and bad points, and no views about himself entertained by his fellows can modify that knowledge one way or the other. Consequently he is not always busy trying to seduce his circle of relatives, friends and acquaintances into a good opinion of him. This makes him stiff, independent, unamenable and dignified—in fact, everything that the modern world is least able to tolerate with patience.

The modest man lives in his neighbour’s views of himself. He depends on them for his self-esteem and therefore for his *joie de vivre*. On these views he measures his worth. It is only human, therefore, that he should be anxious to make them as favourable as possible.

Now it is this constant effort to make these views as favourable as possible, and the pleasure he feels over the success of his efforts, that constitute the characteristic known as ‘vanity’ for which the modern man is notorious. It is obvious that when no other deeper motives interfere—as in the case of all those people whom I call negative, and whose physiological or bodily promptings are hardly audible—vanity very soon becomes the only mainspring of action. It constitutes the only tribunal before which life’s alternatives are drawn for examination, and, according to whether vanity promises to be gratified or not by a certain course, that course is adopted or rejected.

When I say, therefore, that these vain, modest and negative people approximate nearest to the passionate, tragic type, it will readily be seen why this must be so. For to snub or to withhold your good opinion from the vain man or woman is not only an offence in itself; it also deprives that man or woman of self-esteem for the time being. They depend on your good opinion of themselves. Not to give them your good opinion is therefore tantamount to depriving them of their mainspring, which is gratified vanity. But this is as good as killing them. Until they can find someone, or think of

someone, who can cancel out your poor opinion of them by a more exalted opinion, they are therefore desperate. They hate with a homicidal hatred—vain people never forgive anyone who has mortified their vanity—and this makes them tragic. Tragedy among vain negative people is always to be traced to wounded vanity and never to passion. The constant mistake made by the modern world is to confound the passionate crime with the crime that arises from vanity. But the passionate crime is of a different order of rank altogether. It is always a crime arising out of an affront against life itself, whereas the crime that springs from vanity is always the result of the much more insignificant fact that somebody's good opinion of himself has been assailed.

In class (d) we also have a very large and growing section of the population, particularly among the middle classes. It consists of people not unlike the former, but who know exactly what real passion does and how it does it, and who proceed to ape it in every momentous incident of their lives. They are negative and therefore have no genuine promptings from passion, but they read and observe a good deal and they emulate their passionate fellows with a pertinacity worthy of a better purpose. They will fall in love, marry, commit adultery, divorce and even commit murder, provided that they can convince themselves that each successive step has been taken in the grand style. And as they proceed through their various metamorphoses, they watch themselves with the double interest of participators and spectators of a great drama. (*Woman: A Vindication*, pp. 213–27)

Wives

[T]he housewife among the poor who rears a family and discharges all her household duties as well is a heroine, and the extraordinary feature of our Western civilization is that, while millions of such heroines have lived and died in each generation for centuries, they have been passed over unhonoured, unrewarded—aye, unnoticed.

Havelock Ellis has said that in England 'motherhood is without dignity'. He might have added that domesticity is without dignity either. For in a society where, from the western states of North America almost to the confines of Asia, honour is vouchsafed only to wealth, it was inevitable that unremunerated duties, like those of domesticity and motherhood, should be bereft of dignity. (*Enemies of Women*, p. 110)

A woman's most valuable gifts are adaptability, receptivity, supple intelligence, penetration, a deep concern about humanity—even to the point of 'scandalmongering'—and a taste for domestic and maternal duties. As compared with such gifts, academic knowledge is so much trash. (*The Choice of a Mate,* p. 469)

It is more important to secure a girl with a kind heart and ardent sensibilities than one with a reputation of being 'a good sport', or of having 'a sense of humour', because innumerable normal incidents in the home demand an ability to feel deeply about a matter, and a sense of humour denotes a congenital inability to feel deeply.

It is, above all, essential to get rid of certain wholly unfounded illusions about the character of the normal woman, which have been cultivated by the shallow psychology and sentimentality of the nineteenth century. These illusions are based on the 'fairy' or 'angel' ideal of women, according to which the female is supposed to be something less material, less gross, less animal than the male. These illusions still prevail very widely, and the modern woman, although she is secretly aware of their spuriousness, does her utmost to keep them alive.

They depict woman as a creature more 'unselfish', less greedy, less sensual, more moral and more humanitarian than man.

I have already shown how ridiculous the claim of greater 'unselfishness' is in the female. As to the claim that she is less greedy, the facts adduced by impartial witnesses regarding women and diabetes and women and gallstone disease dispose of it utterly, and it requires no further refutation here. The claim that women are less sensual and more moral than men, if any sensible man should require it to be exposed for him, will be found adequately refuted in [Female Psychology, on pp. 111-14], while as to the claim of greater humanitarianism, this will have to be dealt with afresh, although I have already discussed it elsewhere.

First, let us understand what inhumanity is.

It is as a rule, a perversion—i.e., a non-life-promoting and one-sided specialization, as an end in itself—of what is a useful natural disposition. What is this disposition? It is obviously sadism. Sadism has natural and normal roots and a natural, normal function. In the male it is expressed harmlessly and joyfully in his relation to the weaker female in normal love-making. Its chief element is the joy of power over a fellow-creature. In the

female it is expressed harmlessly and joyfully in her relation to the helpless infant in normal motherhood.

Sadism becomes a perversion only when power over a fellow creature is sought and enjoyed as an end in itself, divorced from its normal life-promoting components.

Thus, normally a woman expresses her masochistic feelings in her relation to man, and her sadistic feelings in her relation to her infant child. Man normally expresses his masochistic feelings in his relation to the social power he honours and serves and is prepared to die for, and his sadistic feelings in his relation to woman.

To deny that the proneness to a sadistic perversion is just as strong in woman as in man is, therefore, shallow and unenlightened. And the woman who, as a spinster or as a wife with inadequately expressed motherhood, finds her normal sadism pent-up, is just as likely as an ill-adapted man to develop a sadistic perversion—i.e., a love of injuring, hurting, bullying or tyrannizing over a fellow creature as an end in itself. (*The Choice of a Mate,* pp. 455–7)

Balzac says profoundly that ‘a man cannot marry unless he has studied anatomy and dissected at least one female corpse’, because ‘the fate of the marriage depends upon the first night’. Allowing for the amusing exaggeration in the first statement, I entirely agree, and I think it lamentable that most men can talk intelligently and knowledgeably about the smallest structural details of their cars, and are yet ignorant of the most necessary knowledge of all: human structure and mechanism. On the other hand, however, while I too emphasize the importance of a man’s being equipped to master the love-technique, particularly of the first night, I deprecate the modern tendency to make sexual congress loom so conspicuously in the life of the female spouse.

In spite of the howl which I know will be set up in many hedonistic quarters, I maintain, both from my personal experience, which is not small, my reading and my conversation that concentration on the voluptuousness of sexual congress is, generally speaking, in inverse ratio to femininity.

I will try to avoid misunderstanding. I am not saying that the feminine woman with insignificant male components shuns or dislikes sexual congress. I insist, on the contrary, that if she is normal she should wish for it and enjoy it. All I say, and all I mean, is that when in the female there is an

insistent concentration on the orgasm, equivalent to the male's, pronounced male elements may be suspected. And I do not refer here to nymphomaniacs, who besides being invalids are more rare than most people imagine.

I think my position follows *a priori* from the differences in the sexual cycles of the male and female. It cannot be stated often enough that in these days of the ignorant assimilation of female to male, that whereas in the latter the orgasm is the beginning and the end of all, in the former it is but the first stage in a cycle which should last eighteen months at least—i.e., from conception to weaning. And normally, during this period, untold pleasurable sensations are distributed over every day. Sexual congress is thus but a sparking-plug episode, and to appreciate its comparative insignificance from the woman's standpoint it must be valued in relation to the rest of the cycle.

On *a priori* biological grounds alone, therefore, we are compelled to suppose that woman's instinctive desire is for the whole cycle (however unconscious the extent of the desire may be) and not for any part of it. Nay, we are compelled to suppose that any conscious urgent insistence on a part of the cycle, to the neglect of the rest, is actually abnormal.

When, however, we find a medical authority as scholarly as Dr Robert Briffault assuring us that 'extreme sexuality in the female … opposed to the periodical character of the female impulse, is undoubtedly a transferred male character'; when a people as wise as the ancient Hindus are found associating the woman 'who is always pricked with lust and who is always addicted to lasciviousness' with the type 'who neither fears her husband nor other respectable persons', and when we find this type, the Sankhini woman, described as 'the lustful, who always hankers after uniting with males' and physically as follows: 'her body is tall, breast hard but of stunted growth', full 'of words sweet and her neck bears three line-marks', we find remarkable confirmation of much personal experience. For, be it noted, this Hindu description is that of a masculoid female. (*The Choice of a Mate*, pp. 464–5)

Husbands

It is above all important [in judging the character of a prospective husband] to try to get away from the tawdry characteristics which the popular press, hearsay and shallow fiction exalt as chiefly desirable—i.e., 'a

sense of humour', so-called 'unselfishness', and 'sportiness', which, even if they were of value, are not necessarily manly—and to concentrate on those manly qualities which the Age neglects and even deprecates: will-power, consistency, leadership, resolution, good taste, discernment, self-control, a capacity for self-discipline rather than for fellow-discipline (the man who cannot discipline himself is more prone to exercise tyranny than the man who can), sound judgement (the prerequisite of justice), and ambition free from overweening aspirations.

Do not be put off by a certain tendency to extravagance in the male. Unbecoming as it is in a woman, remember that it is really a counterpart of the male's essentially catabolic nature, and, as that profound psychologist, Marcel Proust, maintains, 'is in itself the proof of a rich personality' ('rich' here meaning richly endowed psychophysically).

Remember that a good deal of the degeneration of the modern Anglo-Saxon male is due to the fact that, for generations, we have been content to class as 'manly' the man who was brave in a military sense and proficient in sport, and to overlook other qualities more essential to the modern civilized male, which were frivolously taken for granted if he had a good sports or games record. The latter is not unimportant, because … success in sport and games depends to a great extent on good health. But it is a mistake to give it undue prominence. And as for bravery, although it is essential in a male, it is such an elementary male quality and found so far back in the evolutionary ladder that to argue, as people have argued, that the bravery shown in the [First World] War proved that modern man was not so degenerate is to misunderstand the whole problem of degeneracy and progressive evolution.

A good test is a man's relationship to his womenfolk and theirs to him. Do his sisters respect his judgement? Do they lean on him or have they grown up in an atmosphere of contempt for the male? Does he sway them by his natural ascendancy or by wiles? Does he practise what he preaches—i.e., if he believes in male leadership, is there a single decent woman who has ever been known to follow him willingly and absolutely?

Remember that, although a girl's self-esteem may be flattered by associating with a man whom she can turn and twist at will, she is happiest in the end with the man on whom she can rely and who has the personality described above. As things are, however, after two thousand years of the

hot-house forcing of intellect, brains have become so plentiful and cheap that it is important to bear in mind that brains without character (like education without character) are worthless, and may even be a doubtful asset. Remember, too, that the best brains … are found in the healthy. (*The Choice of a Mate*, pp. 400–1)

There is nothing more harrowing, more pathetic, more heart-rending, than to witness poor, patient and enduring life, in the form of a beautiful maiden, being forced by circumstances (by the fact, perhaps, that this is the girl's only chance) to choose the next best, the second-best, the third-best. Oh, how she stifles her highest feelings. How she chafes beneath the yoke. And how ruthlessly life re-registers upon her eyes all the defects of her future mate, as fast as she in her positiveness wipes them away with the impatient sponge of her desire …

Unfortunately, it is not unusual nowadays for the positive healthy girl, particularly of the wealthier classes, to be spoilt by foolish modern prejudices that misguide her in this first important criticism of the men with whom she is confronted. From the very atmosphere she has breathed ever since her infancy she has imbibed certain wholly fictitious standards regarding so-called 'manliness' which, at this vital moment in her life, frequently cause her to make the most grievous mistakes. She has had dinned into her the innumerable conventional desiderata relating to manners, sporting capacities, cheerfulness, levity, boyishness and bodily build which now cause her to select consciously the very kind of man who is least likely to constitute an understanding and adequate mate. He must possess a certain kind of mind: supple, ready for light laughter, humorous, not too broody, not too masterful, not too self-centred, and above all painstakingly chivalrous. He must have had his spirit, if not broken, at least curbed by the public-school system; his self-esteem severely shaken by excessive contact with mediocrities who have insisted on his being like one of themselves, and he must have the body and face of a young athlete. He must be capable of being trusted alone with her on rambles in the country, at games, on short excursions. He must not take himself or his claims or his thoughts too seriously, and the *sine qua non* is that he must be capable of idealizing woman, of looking up to her, of feeling a lump in his throat at the thought of her purity, her devotion, her 'heroism' as a mother, her condescension as a possible mate to himself, and her ladyhood …

But let us see what unspoilt life, through the positive unspoilt girl, is actually trying to discover in the positive young man before her. Is she concerned with probing his soul? Does she meditate about his chances of going to heaven when he dies? Is she wondering whether he has a load of sin that weighs him down? She is very far from giving a thought to these matters. Her primary consideration is undoubtedly: is he a fully-equipped male? Is he a normally equipped male? Has he, above all, that exuberance which at one and the same time is beauty, sexual potency and tense passion? Is he savoury—that is to say, is he devoid of everything capable of ultimately inspiring disgust? Classical features are by no means a vital consideration. Exuberance and savouriness are much more important. Is there fire in his eyes, voluptuousness and fullness in his mouth? Is there eagerness and enthusiasm in the dilation of his nostrils? Is there energy lurking in the vibrations of his voice? Is his mouth clean and his breath pure? Is there all this and yet a remoteness from the brute, from the mere animal, into the bargain?

These facts are ascertained in the first few seconds, and all this time life alone has been active in criticism. A satisfactory reply to all these questions makes the young man at once an object of the keenest interest to the girl, and her eyes now begin, in a more collected and less rapid manner, to survey the accessory man: his hands, his feet, his taste as revealed by his clothes, his intelligence as revealed by his remarks, his degree of mastery as revealed by his manner of approaching her. All these things are important, because they represent not merely the ‘quality’ but also the ‘surviving power’ of the tree to which the female butterfly is going to entrust her eggs.

A sleek, flourishing youth has a tremendous advantage here, because it is not woman’s self-preservative instinct that demands the evidence of a sound worldly position in a man, but again her reproductive instinct thinking of the security of the coming brood. All this, of course, is more or less unconscious, but it is satisfactorily accomplished by the instinct.

A brilliant exuberant youth who is shabby and poor is naturally and very rightly less attractive to the positive girl than the youth who, though less brilliant but quite as exuberant, flings on an opulent fur coat after a champagne supper and gracefully hands her and her chaperon into his 40-horse-power Rolls-Royce. This youth is simply irresistible!

This must be so. Because, although the more brilliant youth may be an artist, a fascinating poet or a gifted musician, all these things belong to the sphere of the social instinct, which woman can scarcely appreciate critically, while the flourishing circumstances of the fur-coated youth belong to the sphere of the reproductive instinct, since they are one of the necessary conditions of the tree to which the eggs are going to be entrusted.

Great spiritual gifts *per se* never really attract the healthy, positive girl. The only reason why she so frequently falls in love with men of great spiritual gifts is because extraordinarily high sexual exuberance is so often correlated with great spiritual gifts and powerful creative genius in a young man. In later life, of course, the relationship changes, because you cannot burn a candle at both ends, and the man of great spiritual gifts who has cultivated that side of himself alone generally suffers a proportionate loss of sexual exuberance as he advances in years. But in any case, as far as young men are concerned, the rule holds good that high sexual exuberance is frequently accompanied by very superior spiritual gifts.

Incidentally, this association always constitutes the most dangerous and often most disastrous characteristic of the artist's life. It is a choice of roads, and frequently the favour he finds with women leads the young artist inevitably along the road of least resistance and greatest voluptuousness.

Recalling our positive couple, we will suppose that the youth, in addition to responding favourably to all the girl's searching scrutiny, is also a person of sound material position. Then, when the chorus of bodily messages to the girl's brain are unanimous in praising him, consciousness comes forward with the conclusion: 'That man attracts me or fascinates me' or 'That man is a dream' or 'He's my ideal', etc., etc. It is from this moment that the relationship of virgin love may be said to begin, and if there is a response from the young man besides—if, that is to say, he also comments favourably on the girl—then the two may be said to be each other's destiny, and if they are both very positive, and therefore impatient, the sooner they marry the better.

Many girls are, however, so overwhelmed by spiritual gifts nowadays that the position of the man, his material wealth, is often foolishly overlooked. On the whole, this is not quite the fault of the modern girl. This age, for some reason or other, sets enormous store by spiritual gifts. Girls are brought up in an atmosphere steeped in the worship of intellect.

‘Clever’—this is the most coveted adjective. Is he clever? Is she clever? Very often the most unhappy marriages are consummated precisely owing to the absurdly exaggerated value that is attached to cleverness. I do not lose sight of the fact that great spiritual gifts are frequently accompanied by great sexual exuberance in a man, and I make allowances for that and for the temptation such a man may certainly prove to the positive girl, but his spiritual gifts ought not to be allowed to weigh against his poverty if he be poor, or his inferiority as an animal if he have bad teeth, an undersized and weak frame, a delicate constitution or foul breath. Only girls, of course, whose minds have been perverted in this matter make the mistake of taking a poor clever man, or an unappetizing clever man, in preference to a duller though wealthier or more appetizing suitor, for the instinct of the female when unperverted is to find not only a secure support for her offspring but also a mate whom it will at least not disgust her to embrace.

And, after all, what does this spiritual fascination amount to for women, apart from its occasional correlation with high sexual exuberance? If you ask yourself what it is you tire of first in life; if you inquire to which kind of phenomenon you can relevantly apply the expression ‘hackneyed’ when you have seen or heard it once too often, what is your inevitable reply? A song, however beautiful, repeated too often becomes a bore. A picture seen too often begins to pall. (It is only because we scarcely ever notice with deep attention the pictures on our walls that we can endure them. In time, they form part of the general scheme of decoration.) The finest poem read too frequently becomes insufferably wearisome, and who can read even the best novel more than three times? I confess I have read *Wuthering Heights* three times, but I doubt whether I could perform the feat a fourth time. All these things, however, are of the spirit, products of spiritual gifts. It would not sound strange or irrelevant to apply the epithet ‘hackneyed’ to any of them, provided that their charms had been impressed upon us once too often. This fact alone should make us suspicious of the spirit as a phenomenon possessing lasting powers of attraction.

There are, however, other things to which the expression ‘hackneyed’ could not be relevantly applied. What should we think or say, for instance, of a visitor who, rising suddenly in the middle of one of our tea-parties, exclaimed quite gravely that she refused to take another piece of bread-and-butter for the rest of her life, because bread-and-butter was ‘hackneyed’? We should all be astonished, not to say alarmed. We should suspect her of

something a little more serious than mere eccentricity. But, as a matter of fact, nobody in his senses, however professedly devoted to the spirit he might be, would ever dream of saying ‘bread-and-butter is hackneyed’. It is a thing of the body and, provided the body remains healthy and exuberant, the pleasures it provides are never hackneyed. Given a fair appetite and a healthy digestion, and bread-and-butter will remain a joy forever. Unlike the spirit, therefore, which, however exuberant and however healthy, wearies and fatigues if it be called upon to appreciate the same spirit or the same product of another spirit too often, the body can enjoy ‘bread-and-butter’ for three score years and ten without ever feeling that it is hackneyed.

This alone ought to make all admirers of ‘brains’ in men pause before they allow themselves to be so completely dazzled by mere spiritual brilliance as to forget other things. What other things? Material position and that quality which all eminently desirable men have in common with good bread-and-butter: I refer to savouriness. (*Woman: A Vindication,* pp. 81–7)

Feminism

[W]hat we may undoubtedly gather from the records of the historical period is that, whenever and wherever there has occurred the decline of a civilization through the degeneration of its male popul-ation, not only have women always been in the ascendant, but there has always occurred, *pari passu* with the gradual deterioration of the males, a corresponding increasing assertion of female influence and a tendency to regard the sexes as equal.

It is as if the swan-song of great civilizations were always intoned by soprano voices and the gradual crescendo of these voices in our midst should, like the shriek of the locomotive entering a tunnel, warn us that there is probably a long and gloomy period of darkness before us, during which it will be idle to hope either for illumination or for pure air.

At the dawn of ancient Greek civilization, the inferiority of women was strongly asserted, and the existence of concubinage on a large scale shows the small amount of influence that even the best of the Homeric women could have had. Penelope, for instance, takes no exception to the fact that her husband Odysseus is the accepted lover of Calypso and Circe; illicit unions with women were not held to be dishonouring to either party. Women captives, even when they were of the royal line, were, moreover,

treated with scanty consideration. A woman was purchased from her father by her lover, and in Hesiod, who probably gives a truer picture of the position of women in the earliest days of Greece, a woman is counted with a horse or an ox.

Later on, in the historical period, better-class virtuous women lived a life of perfect seclusion and accepted the common inferiority of womankind as part of the law of life. There was no social intercourse with men and the women lived in a separate part of the house, but wives sat at their husband's boards and met their husband's friends. The class of women, however, that became more and more emancipated as time went on were the *hetairai* or courtesans, who, as their name implies, were much more the companions of men than were the respectable matrons. Some of these women lived in great splendour and towards the end of Greek greatness were the friends and equals of the philosophers. Socrates associated on equal terms with the courtesan Diotima, and Epicurus, over a hundred years later, had the courtesan Leontium among his most ardent disciples.

It was therefore in this class that Greek feminism took its root, and, although we may gather from the marked difference between Xenophon's and Plutarch's description of the Greek wife how much freer even the married woman had become at the end of Greece's glory, we must look to the *hetairai* for a movement which can with any justice be called feministic.

It is quite evident that, by the time Aristophanes' *Thesmo-phoriazusae* and *Ecclesiazusae* were written, a woman question must already have arisen in ancient Greece, and that it was exercising the minds of the people. And seeing that, according to our most reliable information concerning the *hetairai*, they bear the closest resemblance to the women who in Euripides and Aristophanes are represented as the leaders of the woman movement, we are led to believe that emancipation started with them.

The fact that they were the more educated class among the women is shown by Socrates' hint to Aristobulos that Aspasia will explain to him how to educate his young wife, while in the *Menexenus* Socrates again refers to the *hetairai* as educators.

Ivo Bruns, who has produced an interesting treatise on the woman movement in Athens, is of the opinion that, while the *hetairai* appear to have started and led the feministic agitation in Athens, it could hardly have progressed as triumphantly as it did had not the men of the period

cooperated with the courtesans in its promotion, and he reminds us of how eager the Athenians of the latter half of the fifth century were for any new theory or innovation. According to his view, the extremes to which the movement led are to be accounted for in this way. In the *Ecclesiazusae* the family is dissolved and free love is instituted, and the fact that Plato, with his principle of the equality of the sexes and his abolition of the family among his guardians, ultimately gave these ideas a philosophic form shows that the philosophers were in this more the followers of their age than its leaders.

At all events, it is interesting to ascertain, in the first place, that it was among a large class of women who were not breeders that the woman movement began in Athens, and, secondly, that the success of the movement was due largely to the active help of the degenerate men of the age.

For the fact that, at the time when the power of the *hetairai* was at its zenith, Hellenic civilization was proceeding headlong towards ruin is a matter of history. Quite apart from the evidence of this decline which we can find in the literature of the period, we can discern it in every feature of Athenian public life, from the Peloponnesian War to the rule of the demagogues.

There is, in any case, a curious line in Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*, where Lysistrata, addressing the Athenian, says, 'I'm of myself not badly off for brains, and often listening to my father's words and old men's talk, I've not been badly schooled', which seems to show that the younger men of Lysistrata's generation (circa 411 BC) were at least sufficiently degenerate no longer to be capable of guiding or instructing their womenfolk. And when we behold the state of Athens of that day, with the demagogue Cleon only recently dead, with its state doles, its war profiteers, its rabid democracy and its disastrous expedition to Sicily just fresh in the minds of all, we require no further proof of the degeneracy of the male population, and are not surprised to find that a woman movement was in full swing and that the doctrine of the equality of the sexes was beginning to be taught as a principle of almost obvious validity.

The rest is well-known. A brief period of anarchy preceded the ulti-mate fall of Athens in 404 BC; Sparta, for a while, was then supreme in Greece;

Thebes followed; and finally, with the arrival of Philip, ancient Greece became no more than a memory.

In Sparta, which was organized entirely on military lines and for military purposes, women were from the first regarded as essential contributors to the national stamina and martial spirit, and were therefore subjected to much the same discipline as the men. The girls, in common with the boys, underwent an arduous gymnastic training and, as the sexes practised gymnastics together and the young women were allowed to appear almost nude, there naturally arose a freedom between the sexes which was in marked contrast to the seclusion of the Athenian women. And yet Spartan women were said to have had a high reputation for chastity, and it would be a mistake to conclude, because Sparta was a large camp in which women cooperated with the men in realizing the national ideal, that therefore they were, at least in the heyday of Spartan prosperity, as emancipated as many have supposed. Although, as a nation of warriors, the men were necessarily bound to leave much of their home concerns in the hands of their women, there does not appear to have been a woman's movement in Sparta until complete degeneracy had set in—that is to say, in the third century BC—and in Plutarch's life of Agis much light is thrown upon this latest development of Spartan life. It is true that, like all purely military states, Sparta probably suffered as much as we are suffering from a too narrowly limited ideal of manliness, and there can also be no doubt that Aristotle was right when he declared that the heavy losses in men and the consequent necessity of leaving property to women (because they were so often the sole heirs) ultimately led to a good deal of power being transferred to the female population. In the fourth century BC, for instance, nearly half the land in Laconia was already owned by women. But the executive remained until the end in male hands. That the male population degenerated may be concluded from the facts I have elsewhere adduced in regard to the decline of the ruling caste, while we are also led to believe that, at the time Aristotle was writing, life had become dissolute and luxurious in Lacedaemon. When, therefore, we learn that, at this period and after, women probably reached the zenith of their power in Sparta—that is to say, just before and after Sparta's fall—it need not surprise us.

Far be it from me to suggest that the influence of women necessarily had any connection with the ultimate downfall of Greece. All I am intent upon showing is that the woman's movement, the increase of female power and

the rise of the doctrine of sex equality coincided with the downfall of Athens and Sparta. This is enough for my purpose, as I am not nearly so certain about the lethal effect of female dominance as I am about the inevitable concurrence of such dominance with male degeneracy.

In Rome the history of women followed very much the same course as in Greece, except that in the Roman civilization the courtesan class did not play the same role as it did in the woman movement of Athens. From being wholly subjected to the authority of the head of the family, Roman women, whether they were wives or daughters, gradually acquired an independence, the growth of which followed closely upon the general decline in public discipline and virtue, till the repeated modification of the laws concerning their status and rights ended in their complete emancipation.

At first the daughter of the house was reckoned as no more than her father's slave, and the wife *in manu*,[20] who had the same rank as the daughter, was likewise powerless to resist the will of her lord and master. Thus, wives, children and slaves were equally subject to the power of the paterfamilias. The father could dispose absolutely of his daughter's hand and, if he chose, even break off a marriage that had already been contracted. If the girl were married by being placed 'in the hand' of her husband, her father then relinquished his power over her, and she fell under the absolute authority of her husband. If, however, despite her marriage, she remained in the family of her father, her husband did not become her guardian, and her father's original authority could be asserted over her at any time.

At the time when Roman women were subject to this protection and custody, manners and morals were severe in the state. But it must not be supposed on that account that the women ever led the life of absolute seclusion which was the lot of Athenian wives. They appear, on the contrary, to have been very much more the companions of their husbands in public and, in spite of this, for a very long period to have maintained their reputation for virtue.

During the era of the Punic Wars and after, however (circa 264-146 BC), a marked change took place in the morals and manners of the Roman people. The old rigidity was relaxed, domestic ties were loosened, the old authority of the head of the family was undermined both by legislative and popular influence, and, by the time the Empire was established, Roman society was almost completely degraded. *Pari passu* with these changes, the

former tutelage and dependence of the women had gradually vanished, and with the advent of the first emperors female emancipation had become an accepted fact.

There can, however, be little doubt that the power and influence of Roman women had been developing, and had even asserted itself long before the advent of Augustus, for during the consulship of Cato the Censor and Valerius Flaccus an incident occurred which can leave no doubt in anybody's mind about feminine ascendancy during the latter days of the Republic.

It will be remembered that, at the height of the Second Punic War (215 BC), a law had been passed to restrict the extravagance of women and to limit their jewellery and wardrobes. And in 195 BC, just before Cato set sail for his appointed province in Spain, it was proposed that this measure, known as the Oppian Law, should be abolished. Cato stoutly resisted the proposal and appears to have made an ungallant speech in defence of the law. Now, during the negotiations which took place to decide this important issue, an extraordinary scene occurred in ancient Rome. The Roman matrons sallied forth *en masse* into the streets of the city, deliberately caused obstructions in every avenue leading to the Forum, and importuned their husbands, as they made their way thither, imploring them to give them back their vanities. For a little while the city was a babel of female voices and the scene of the utmost confusion. It is said that the irate females even accosted the praetors, consuls and other magistrates as fast as they appeared. Finally the bold and determined matrons carried the day. The tribunes, M. Brutus and L. Brutus, worn out by their appeals, withdrew their opposition, the hated law was abolished, and the women displayed their enthusiasm by marching in procession through the streets and the Forum, decked out with the ornaments and finery which they could now flaunt with impunity …

This picture of Roman life, about two hundred and fifty years before the advent of the first emperor, is interesting as showing the immense power and independence enjoyed by Roman women before the final downfall of the Republic, and it should not surprise us, therefore, to hear that by the time the Empire was established their freedom was practically won.

At the time of Gaius, in the second century AD, the tutelage of women was only an empty form, and though vestiges of it are found under

Diocletian towards the end of the third century, after that all trace of it entirely disappears.

True, female emancipation never advanced to the stage of giving women civic or political powers. This is also true of Greece. Short of that, however, woman certainly acquired absolute legal independence and a good deal of political influence, just about the time when the Roman world had definitely begun to decline, and we have only to remember the activities of a man like Musonius Rufus, who in Nero's day was teaching the equality of the sexes, we have only to think of such viragoes as Amaesia or Maesta of Sentinum, surnamed Androgyne for her masculine mind, and of the *conventus matrorum*, a regular assembly of women under the Empire, in order to find ourselves again confronted by the strange phenomenon of the degeneration of a male culture coinciding with the steady increase of female freedom and assertiveness.

Turning now to France, we find the century which brought an end to the monarchy and culminated in the horrors of the Revolution was a century not only of feminine emancipation but also of feminine rule. As early as 1723, Madame Palatine, writing to her son Philippe d'Orléans, said: 'I have resolved not to interfere. Between ourselves France has, to her detriment, been too long governed by women.[21] I wish my example to be useful to my son, that he may let no woman lead him'.

But the century continued as it had begun. As the de Goncourts said, 'in the eighteenth century woman is the principle that governs, the reason that directs, the voice that commands', and the power fell into the hands of one woman after another. First it was the Marquise de Prie, then it was Madame de Vintemille, followed by the Duchesse de Châteauroux, Madame de Pompadour, Madame du Barry and finally Marie Antoinette. By the end of the century nemesis came, and when the confusion was at its highest it was again the women who did most to accentuate its horrors. Even Mirabeau, who believed in sex equality, was revolted by what he saw, but it did not prevent Condorcet, the fanatic of democracy, from recommending votes for women.

As Ostrogorski says, 'having flung themselves into the Revolution with an ardour and an enthusiasm not devoid of grandeur at the outset, they [the women] soon lost all balance, intellectual and moral. The feminists themselves were disgusted in the end, if not by their excesses, at least by

the habit into which they fell, of exciting the people, of remonstrating with the men in office, and of promoting disorder in the streets'.

At last the Convention decreed (1793) the suppression of all female clubs and societies. Subsequently it prohibited any public assembly of women, the female politician completely disappeared, and with the advent of Napoleon a fresh manly era was inaugurated.

The important conclusions to be drawn from the above facts are: first, that there appears to be a close relation between the emancipation of, or the increase of power among, women and the decline of a civilization, and, secondly, that the rise of female power does nothing and can do nothing to check or cure the vices in a civilization which are contributing to its downfall. Least of all can the rise of female power lead to the production of anything great by women, or bring about the only condition which can restore health to a people's institutions—namely, a regeneration of its manhood. Greece and Rome never recovered, and France had the good fortune to be saved by a genius, who was a stranger in the nation and whose virile lead alone restored the vigour of her male population. (*Man: An Indictment*, pp. 67–77)

Male Degeneracy

The Englishman's attitude to woman has already been partly discussed … Here it will be necessary to deal only with those influences determining his attitude which have not yet been mentioned. They are: (a) his insistence upon a humorous relation, (b) his lack of catholicity and versatility, (c) his reverence for chivalry, (d) his lack of penetration and psychological insight, and (e) his lack of will power.

> (a) I have already discussed the insistence on humour and its relation to passion and religion. But it is important to notice that it not only has a bearing upon the sex life, through the association of humour with a lack of passion, as already pointed out above, but that it also influences the rest of the relationship of man and woman. It colours the whole of their outlook, in this sense, that the passionate relationship is forced into the background. The severest change that history will be able to bring against Anglo-Saxon culture is that it led Anglo-Saxon women to seek the passionate relationship elsewhere than in their association with man and the child. To have brought things to such a pass that we now have half our womenfolk, even the married ones, not

only declaring that the joys of the sex relationship are grossly overrated but also pursuing with passionate attachment callings which release them from their natural calling, their only true calling, means that we have made a hash of the sexual side of women's lives. We have sickened and wearied them of a relationship which ought to be their greatest joy and preoccupation. We have actually extirpated in them the impulse which springs from their strongest and deepest instinct. By losing the art of love, by reducing the sexual life of woman chiefly to painful childbearing, we have neglected that oldest part of her nature, which was formed during the long ages before the mammalia existed and before childbearing had become a female function, and in this sense we have wounded and goaded an old instinct into a state of cynical revolt.

We have treated woman as a playmate, as a companion, as a fellow-golfer and tennis-player. We have expected her to be all these things and to roam the country with us on far too long rambles and to admire the view. We have called 'jolly' the girls who could associate with us in this way without reminding us of sex or of the fact that they were fully-equipped females. The girl who could spend weeks and months with us in this way we have spoken of as one that 'had no nonsense about her', meaning no passion so irrepressible as to be inconvenient. Thus we have forced even the girls 'with nonsense about them' to behave like neuters, and the rest to look and act as if they had hardly any of the woman about them. These girls are humorous like ourselves, their stifled passions have been deflected or atrophied, and they have become that horrible product of tepid temperaments and damp fingertips know as 'the pal'. How can we wonder that they express their passion in causes, movements, callings and breadwinning? But it was our incompetence and our failure to understand them, our fear of love and our dread or ignorance of its arts, that made us prefer the girl who had 'no nonsense about her'. The Anglo-Saxon has a deal to answer for. He has transformed his woman and himself, and he would have transformed the whole world to match his woman and himself if his power had not begun to decline through the decadence brought on by his various transformations.

(b) The Englishman's lack of catholicity in tastes and of versatility in gifts makes him frequently look up to his mate as a prodigy of both

general knowledge and general acumen. Women, owing to the fact that until quite lately they have escaped most of the specialist and routine tasks of breadwinning, have retained more of their pristine catholicity of interests. While therefore they bewilder men with the range and glamour of their mental activities, they feel his limitations as tiresome and even exasperating. To find a complete male environment, therefore, they would be forced to have about them many males of various callings. The modern specialist and specialized male no longer fills their lives—can no longer, in fact, give them a full life. Moreover, he is aware of his limited range. He becomes, through repeated humiliations, subjected by the broader scope of his mate's adaptations. He may feel no interest, or very little, in poetry, in human nature, in art. His speciality, and the specializing above all of his ancestors, may have forced him to concentrate on one point of existence to the exclusion of all else. He may love this narrow specialization. This, however, only makes him the more helpless before the nimble versatility of his mate's mind and, what is more important, makes it difficult for him to take the lead. When an occasion arises that seems to invite him to take the lead, he finds that the past history of his life with her, with all its repeated little triumphs of intellect on her side, has robbed him of the requisite ascendancy and prestige. She may be nervous, exhausted and reduced, owing to the need that has thus arisen, for her to act and to make weighty decisions in a crisis. She may despise him while enjoying and suffering from the power his latter-day mediocrity has given her. But meanwhile he is inclined to think that men are superior to women only in physical strength. (He does not like to be told that this is true only of a country in which the men have lost their intellectual superiority through narrow specialization and intellectual decay.) And when he contemplates the work of the feminists, and the alleged 'advance of women', he fancies he sees in these phenomena only the inevitable march of progress and the results of the higher evolution of his species.

(c) The Englishman's reverence for the modern notion of chivalry, which is summed up by the tag 'play the game', is inculcated upon him at school and it makes him an easy victim of his female circle. There is nothing more admirable than a chivalrous spirit—that spirit which arose in Europe in feudal times, and which makes it incumbent

upon the superior and the stronger to protect the weaker from all molestation and assault, and to meet for him or her all difficulties with which the weaker cannot reasonably be expected to cope. And it would be an excellent thing if chivalry in this sense were more widely practised. Perhaps the finest exponents of chivalry in the whole world were the old Maoris of New Zealand, who would never continue a fight if their opponent were at the slightest disadvantage from the lack of food or water, or from inability through lack of time to collect and tend their wounded. How this chivalry on the part of the Maoris was exploited by English settlers does not constitute the finest page in the history of the Empire. But this is another matter. Suffice it to say that the tradition of chivalry exists wherever feudalism once prevailed, and its very essence is to thwart and resist that bullying propensity in the powerful which tends to victimize individuals or groups who have momentarily no means of protection or who are in any way at a disadvantage. The spirit which caused Pope Innocent II in the reign of Stephen to prohibit the use of the arbalest as ‘a barbarous weapon unfit for Christian warfare’; which led Charles V in 1376 to celebrate the memory of the Black Prince in a solemn service, although the latter was his bitter and successful enemy; and which made Robert of Normandy refuse to besiege one castle when the besieged were waterless and another when Henry I’s queen was in childbed inside it —this spirit may be said to be quite extinct. For many years now European nations have thought nothing of slaughtering, with all the terrible weapons of modern warfare, savages who were armed only with spears and bows and arrows, and no civilized nation during the last hundred years at least has scrupled to take advantage of an opponent’s momentary bad fortune, or disadvantage in the matter of munitions or water or food, in order to crush him. And the same is true, more or less, of social life within the various states. To be undefended is, as a rule, to be victimized. Think, for instance, of the treatment of the women and children in the early days of the nineteenth century in the mines and mills of the north of England. While publicly England fought for the emancipation of the slaves in America, her own women and children were working in chains underground. In social life too, therefore, we may say that the spirit of

chivalry is dead. The exploitation of the weak—I do not mean the sick; that is another matter—goes on interruptedly day after day.

There is, however, a curious survival of the idea of chivalry which is at once a distortion and a travesty of its original character, and that is the belief which prevails in certain classes that it is not ‘chivalrous’ for a man to have his way with a woman. Truth to tell, however, if a man is to hold himself responsible for the woman who is his mate, he must at times ‘have his way’, for a man cannot be held responsible for someone whom he cannot guide: that is elementary. The Alpine guide soon points out to a recalcitrant tourist that only if he falls in with the rest of the party and does not stray—that is to say, only if he follows the guide—can the latter be responsible for him. And the same holds good all through life.

Now, it is obviously the chivalrous thing for a man to hold himself responsible for his womenfolk. To decline responsibility here is to do precisely what the knight of old least wished to do. Chivalry was the responsible side of feudalism. But how can a man make himself responsible without occasionally, at least on matters where his responsibility is likely to be called to account, having his way?

There is thus an apparent contradiction between ideal or practical chivalry—the only chivalry that matters, and which is the willingness to be held responsible for someone weaker or more dependent than oneself—and that other idea of chivalry which is modern, false and sentimental, and which practically amounts to a renunciation of any right to prevail over a woman, whether or not she be one’s spouse.

How does the Englishman extricate himself from this dilemma? Very simply. He maintains his sentimental notion that it is not chivalrous or ‘the game’ to prevail over a woman, and is therefore committed to the necessary corollary of giving up responsibility. This is being done more and more, and even the law is being altered to make the change more complete and more effectual.

Thus we have on the one hand, in the average married couple of the cultivated classes, a creature who eschews coming to grips, who renounces his right to have his way, because through some foolish misunderstanding of chivalry he feels it would not be ‘playing the game’ to have his way with a woman; and on the other we have

another creature, woman, who, not being expected to be ‘chivalrous’ or ‘to play the game’, repeatedly gains the victory over her mate through the permanent advantage she possesses of being able to break rules that her mate feels bound to observe.

She moreover knows that, just as he likes to be thought humorous, he also wishes to be considered what is vulgarly called ‘a sport’. And if he ever ventures to thwart her he is quickly brought to heel by being menaced with the immediate loss of his reputation for ‘sportiness’. When women want their way—and they usually will have it, if they are allowed—they are little concerned about ‘playing the game’. In fact they are not, as I say, expected to play it. Consequently, when they are confronted by a man whose pride lies in his ‘chivalry’, their victory is always assured. When, in addition, we remember that almost the whole of popular and learned opinion in England supports this insensate interpretation of ‘chivalry’, and that the woman feels this background of sympathy behind her, we cannot be surprised that guidance, responsibility and authority in the home, if not also everywhere else, [have] passed almost entirely into the hands of women.

Frequently it happens—Gissing mentions an instance, doubtless drawn from life—that a woman may crave to be mastered; when, in the midst of a storm of tears, stamping of angry feet and offensive remarks, she may wonder why her man does not at last impose his will with violence, and half-wishes he would.

When, however, one’s vanity lies in one’s good name for ‘chivalry’, one is induced to sustain it even at the cost of ignominious defeat, and thus too often a scene, which, if energetically handled, might consolidate the love of a couple, ends in building a barrier of strangeness between them. For the woman, dissatisfied with and contemptuous of her alleged ‘chivalrous’ partner, does not forgive him for his lack of ordinary human skill in managing her, and, his ‘chivalry’ having tamed him, she dreams of the sheikh who is still untamed. Hence the enormous popularity in England of all that class of fiction which depicts amorous commerce between Arab sheikhs and white women.

This so-called ‘chivalry’, too, is a sign of mental softening, for the man of strong character not only insists upon being chivalrous in the

right sense—that is to say, responsible for his dependants—but he also wishes the essential correlative to that condition, which is the right to guide and to have his way where his responsibility is likely to be called to account.

(d) The Englishman's lack of penetration and of psychological insight, by which he repeatedly misunderstands the motivation and general background of his mate's behaviour—her complaints, her moods, her hints, her rebukes and her provocative moments—arises from the fact that generations of routine work, routine games and routine interests have robbed him of normal alertness and awareness. The discussion of psychological problems, like too keen an interest in humanity in general, is never encouraged in England. A humorous remark that makes everyone laugh is very much more welcome at a dinner-table, or anywhere else for that matter, than a penetrating explanation based on skilful analysis. The Englishman, therefore, is more often than not out of touch with problems of human character and motivation. He hardly understands his own sex and cannot therefore be expected to understand his wife's. In addition, his abysmal ignorance of the question of sex itself makes him inclined to take so many of his mate's remarks and actions at their face value, without first interpreting them, that he is usually entirely at sea about her. It is he who keeps alive the absurd belief that no-one can ever understand a woman. And since women do not respect men who do not understand their hidden motivation, although they may say they dislike the men who do, the Englishman has great difficulty in keeping the respect of his womenfolk. As I have already said, it is to the credit of the average Englishwoman that she never pretends to respect her man, but this does not exonerate the Englishman from blame for having forfeited her respect.

Clearly, it must be most difficult to respect anyone who, at every moment of the day, misunderstands one's least cryptic allusion, believes one's most palpable lie and accepts one's moral indignation at its face value. (Moral indignation ought always to be regarded as a suspicious manifestation in anybody, but in a woman it is doubly so.) But all these things the average Englishman will do with unfailing regularity until his wife, if she wishes to be understood, is forced to plain speaking and truth—truth! By that time, however, a doctor is

usually in attendance and a holiday may be prescribed, a holiday away from the need of truth and away from him who needs it, and there may be temporary relief.

(e) The best Englishmen, as a rule, have displayed no lack of will. In their dealings with men, indeed, they have shown a surprising amount of it. The word of command that does not necessarily wound or frighten, but at once secures obedience, is essentially an English characteristic. Nevertheless, I do not think it can be doubted that the will power, at least of the governing classes, is declining, because there has been such a relaxation of discipline all through the nation in recent years that it is impossible not to suspect a serious loss of will in the ranks of those who set the tone and the example to the rest of the community. What is perfectly certain, however, is the fact that in their relationship with women the Englishmen of today have to all intents and purposes relinquished the power of will entirely. Whether they still possess that power as their ancestors did and voluntarily abjure its use, however, or whether they no longer possess it in the same degree, may be a debatable point, but certain it is that one might have to travel far nowadays before coming across a man like Matthew Bramble in [Smollett's] *Humphrey Clinker* who could, when provoked, round on a cantankerous, vain and tyrannical spinster like Tabitha Bramble and secure her prompt obedience. In spite of the advantage which the majority of men have enjoyed until quite recently, and which millions still enjoy, of being the sole economic support in their own household, it is comparatively rare to find that they also succeed in exercising any authority over those who are dependent on them. And it is one of the strange anomalies of English life that direction, and the power of having their own way in all things, has passed almost entirely into the hands of the female section of the married community. Not that we wish to imply by authority an arbitrary exercise of power that overrules all reasonable objection. Authority in the home is something very different. When it is right, it is simply the use of directing power in regard to a partner and other dependents who, inspired by devotion, love and above all confidence—that confidence which comes of experience and of the recognition of superiority—voluntarily accept the leadership of one who they know is worthy of guiding them.

It is difficult to account for this paralysis of masculine will in the presence of women. Is it possibly the outcome of the romantic view of women, discussed [in Female Psychology, on p. 90], where I showed how the alleged greater morality, purity and ‘unselfishness’ of women cowed the morally oppressed man and made him feel inferior? Or is it merely the result of the false interpretation of chivalry discussed in the last section, coupled with the loss of prestige which has come with man’s intellectual and physical decline? I am inclined to believe that all these factors have operated in bringing it about, but I am also persuaded that there has been, in any case, an absolute loss of will power among the men of the nation, through the decline in stamina. Will power, which is the attribute of strong natures that have undergone stern discipline, must necessarily decline in periods of physical debility, physical impoverishment and relaxed discipline; and when, in addition to this, man’s normal sexual relationship to woman is disturbed by puritanical inhibitions and his own sexual feebleness, and his prestige is destroyed by his inadequate intellectual breadth and attainments, it is obvious that the men of today must find it difficult, if not impossible, to assert their will against woman’s.

Nothing, at all events, is more pathetic than an attempt at volition which fails through lack of those essential accompaniments prestige, superior wisdom, proved reliability, sexual mastery and vigour, and strength of character—and a man who, as often happens nowadays, feels that he has to look up to his female partner, owing to his consciousness of the many humiliations or defeats he has suffered in her presence in the sphere of intellect, wise judgement, taste, sexual experience or whatnot, had far better abstain from any such attempt at self-assertion.

On the whole, then, as we have seen, the modern man’s attitude towards woman is of a kind that places him at a constant and very serious disadvantage. But there is little hope of improving the situation until his physical condition is improved, his moral superstitions are destroyed, his notions of chivalry are corrected and his sexual powers and arts are greatly enhanced, for, of all men who wish to have their way in their own homes, that man will succeed least who, while possessing every other gift, yet lacks the oldest and most impressive of masculine claims to authority: sexual vigour and mastery. Whatever

prudish women may say, there is nothing which more utterly destroys a woman's faith and trust in man than precisely deficiency in this department, and that is one of the reasons why puritanism and the systematic reduction of man's sexuality … were bound to lead to feminism. (*Man: An Indictment*, pp. 241–52)

Chapter 5

EUGENICS

In Ludovici's heyday as a writer, during the 1920s and 1930s, many great thinkers believed that mankind should turn its attention from improving the qualities of farm animals, domestic pets and commercially grown flowers, fruit and vegetables towards improving man himself. Even such a liberal hero as Bertrand Russell approved of eugenics. Writing in Whither Mankind *(New York, 1938), a book edited by Charles A. Beard, Russell argued that ancient Rome had declined because intelligent Romans had been outbred by the unintelligent, and he complained that the only impediment to eugenics being applied in present-day Britain and America was 'the fetish of democracy'.*

After Hitler's treatment of Jews, gypsies, homosexuals and infirm children came to light, though, intellectuals in the West tended to regard eugenics as wholly taboo. Nevertheless, concerns about population quality have not gone away. As an example, David Lambert's Cambridge Guide to Prehistoric Man *(Cambridge, England, 1987) points out that such apparent benefits of modern civilization as effective healthcare are allowing genetic faults to prosper. Lambert adds that 'migration, too, has helped halt human evolution. No group lives isolated long enough to evolve into a new species as happened in the Pleistocene. And racial differences will decline with increased interbreeding of peoples from Europe, Africa, the Americas, India, and China'.*

This is all true, even though Ludovici said it 70 years ago. He explained at great length in several books that, among humans, like should mate with like to produce offspring whose mental and physical traits are harmonious. To this end, Ludovici argued for the closest inbreeding, even to the point of incest. Like Sir Francis Galton and many other eugenicists, however, Ludovici fathered no children. But he did try to leave a legacy of another sort. His will in 1971 bequeathed about £70,000 for the University of Edinburgh to conduct research into the effects of miscegenation, especially between whites and blacks. In the event, the university turned down this bequest, and so the parties concerned agreed that a fraction of this money could go to study the genetic disease of Huntington's chorea. Perhaps Ludovici would have been semi-satisfied.

Body and Soul

It seems not to be widely enough known that every essential position of Christianity was first discovered and conquered by the thinkers of Greece: dualism, the immortality of the soul, the alleged superiority of the soul over the body, and the soul's supposed independence of the body …

In a culture which, in spite of much unhealthy speculation about the twofold aspects of man, in spite of universal homosexuality, feminism and general disintegration, was still healthy enough to value man as a whole, and unable to separate beautiful looks from a beautiful character—he who was *kalos* was necessarily *agathos,* hence the expression *kalos k'agathos*: beautiful, therefore good—there appeared a man who, besides being endowed with little of the current health, besides being steeped in the most morbid elements of Greek life and thought (he had been the male prostitute of Archelaus, wherein he did not differ much from his contemporaries), possessed two qualifications which eminently fitted him to popularize the four positions described above.

He was of low origin and he was the most repulsive man of his age. This man was Socrates. In a beautiful city of beauty-worshippers he therefore found himself at a terrible disadvantage. Judged by the healthiest values of his age, he was bound to stand at the very bottom of the scale. Unfortunately for mankind, he had a very shrewd mind. He would have made a first-class journalist, an ideal writer of bestsellers. And he determined to get himself across—i.e., to create values by which he himself and his type could be regarded as desirable.

How could he do this? Only by transvaluing existing values, by assuring the Greeks that there was no essential connection between a man's visible and invisible aspects.

And this he proceeded to do. It was the old hoax of the fox that had lost its tail. But he got away with it. True, he succeeded only with a dolt like Xenophon and a middle-class liberal like Plato, but he did succeed. And although the best of his contemporaries condemned him to death for it, his two apprentices unfortunately survived him and constituted the channel through which we became contaminated by this monster's unscrupulous bluff to save his self-esteem …

He admitted at his trial that he had spent his whole life teaching men to prize the soul above the body … The logical consequence of this attitude was of course to make Socrates no longer despicable. But it had other

consequences which Socrates himself did not fail to see. It made bodily defects respectable. It made disease almost a distinction. And, indeed, Socrates said as much. He declared to Glaucon: ‘If there be any merely bodily defect in another, we will be patient of it and will love the same’. These notes were later taken up by Christianity and sustained in all octaves until the whole of Europe rang with them. And it is more or less true to say that Christianity is merely Platonism for the mob.

Thenceforth, man’s visible aspect, his body, became vile and despicable and his invisible aspect the only exalted and valuable part of him. Henceforward, a pure soul was to justify even foul breath, and a sound biological attitude towards men became no longer possible. A cripple, a hunchback, a person with any deformity or stigma of degeneracy became as desirable as a normal man because it could be argued on Socratic lines that his blemish, his stigma, was not ‘himself’ (whatever that meant!) and that his real self was hidden and redeemed everything.

In vain did the saner people of all civilizations protest, as even science is protesting now, that to divide up man in this way and to lay all the stress on his soul was a gross misinterpretation of the truth. Too many outcasts and toads saw their advantage in this Socratic hoax to relinquish it.

‘The body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness … If through the spirit ye do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live … They that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts’. Thus cried Paul, the Socratic body-hater, and thus did contempt of the body become a household value in Europe. Everybody began to believe the lie that ‘beauty is only skin-deep’; it has artificially conditioned a number of unwholesome reflexes in modern man, and the young of today who go forth to choose a mate should beware of these reflexes.

Although the only sane course is to value man biologically and aesthetically as well as morally, through Socrates a wholly biological and aesthetic standard was converted into a wholly moral method of valuing him. Thus, today, a girl from any class, but particularly from the uneducated class (now thoroughly saturated with Christian values, although but rarely church-going), advised by an anti-Socratic like myself to refrain from marrying a physiologically botched man, replies instantly: ‘Oh, poor chap, he can’t help it’.

Presumably, a man can help being a thief, a seducer, a murderer! But he cannot help being a congenital degenerate. Therefore, since no moral stigma attaches to congenital degeneracy, no stigma whatever attaches to it. It is washed out because it cannot form the subject of an indictment. This shows how the purely moral valuation promotes degeneracy and disease. For, in assessing the value of a mate, the modern person is prepared to forgive stigmata which are nobody's fault and quite forgets that, in thus soft-heartedly forgiving, he or she is cruelly foisting an undesirable parent on his or her offspring.

Add to this Christian pity, which is quite indiscriminate and makes people react with love and charity to all who suffer, irrespective of their value to posterity, and you have a combination of evils which makes complete degeneracy a calculable certainty. In any relation Christian pity is sentimental self-indulgence, but in mating it is criminal self-indulgence.

This does not mean that as an emotion pity should be suppressed altogether. The Church tried to malign Nietzsche by falsely interpreting him as having made this claim. It simply means that it should be differently conditioned from the way Christianity has conditioned it. It should not be indiscriminate and uncontrolled. It should not be turned chiefly towards human rubbish. And it should not be self-indulgent.

The quality of pity should be measured according to the worth to humanity and posterity of the creature pitied.

The farmer cares not a rap for the 'rights' of weeds, or whether they can help being weeds. He pities the nobler plant in its struggle against the ignoble, and refuses to sacrifice the former to the latter.

Every sixpence paid by a desirable couple in taxation and rates for the upkeep of human rubbish is a sacrifice of the greater to the less, and, if such a desirable couple curtail their family to meet national expenditure for degenerates, we plainly kill the best to save the worst. Nobody can deny that this is happening in over-Christianized England. But at least we must free the choice of a mate from these artificially conditioned Christian reflexes, bred in the fetid atmosphere of Europe for the last two thousand years.

To the male, uncontrolled Christian pity is particularly dangerous because it often lends an extra fillip to his instinctive lust to protect and succour the female. Thus it may, and unfortunately often does, make the frail, delicate,

sickly female more alluring, because she makes a heightened appeal to male strength.

To the female, uncontrolled Christian pity is also dangerous because it may, and often does, alas, stimulate the maternal instincts in her and delude her into supposing that the increase in emotion thus generated is really an increase in love. (*The Choice of a Mate*, pp. 21–6)

That the influence of this overemphasis on the soul has been progressive in the last two thousand years, until it has now become possible to be thoroughly unhealthy and yet thoroughly respectable, could be shown by innumerable examples … This much, however, is certain: that, by deflecting the attention of the young for generations from essential somatic prerequisites in the desirable mate, in order to concentrate it chiefly on invisible qualities, either actually present or merely professed (usually the latter), the harm it has done is so incalculable and cumulative that at the present day he is either an uncritical, an ignorant or an inaccurate witness who claims one—yes, only one—wholly sound, harmonious and faultlessly functioning creature in his circle of relations and friends.

Do you know any such? We don't.

The most disparate couples unite without the faintest suspicion of the enormity of their action. Faulty sight, faulty teeth, halitosis, bodily flaws of all kinds, asymmetrical features, a bad heredity, deaf-mutism, mental defect, even insanity, evidence of endocrine imbalance, and skeletal imperfections which in the female impair normal parturition are cheerfully accepted, if only people can find such 'spiritual' qualities as the frivolous fashion of the day ordains. A 'sense of humour', a 'lack of nonsense', a good 'girl-guide' manner, a taste in poetry, a gift for repartee, a weakness for sunsets and fine scenery—these absurdities are allowed wholly to eclipse the presence of varicose veins, chronic visceroptosis, lordosis, kyphosis, colitis, respiratory and hepatic insufficiency, leucorrhea and the various manifestations of endocrine abnormalities, not to mention the diseases of the more serious disabilities. (*The Quest of Human Quality,* p. 181)

Sexphobia

From the blossom that emblazons the landscape in the spring, the flowers that make Nature and our gardens radiant with colour and freshness, and the songs of the birds which inspire the poet, to the bewildering majesty of man and woman at their maturity, with the ecstasy that their union implies—all

the beauty, all the uplifting aspects of life, are steeped in sex. And if the puritan in his ignorance and prurience insists on keeping his sanctimonious nose to the flower, and his shocked ears to the songs of the birds, when he would dwell on the wonders of creation, simply because the fundamental sex element in these manifestations of Nature [is] less obvious to the uninformed than in the beauties of human sexuality, I for my part am more catholic and am proud to think that for all these years my mind has dwelt on the whole panorama of sex and not merely on those 'respectable' aspects of it which are allowed to be seen and mentioned in middle-class drawing-rooms. I do not believe in the Christian god, but I think that those who do pay him little honour in thus picking and choosing from among his alleged creations and turning down what their repressed natures cannot contemplate without a shudder. (*The Choice of a Mate*, p. xi)

[H]ow does Christian sexphobia influence youth unsoundly in the choice of a mate?

In the first place, by a persistent adverse selection against people normally sexed, it has produced a people largely deficient in genetic instincts and has thus substantially reduced human happiness.

Secondly, by making youth ashamed of their own sexual promptings (hence the enormous amount of repression, nervous debility, and auto-eroticism), it has also made them apprehensive of marked signs of sexuality in the sexual object, so that in England and countries like it the asexual type, male and female, has come to be regarded as the desirable type.

Recently, this influence has led to a tendency in men to seek the boyish or infantile girl, with a minimum of sexual development, and a tendency in girls to select the meek, rather soft and gentle type of youth. In men it also leads to a preference for the girl 'who has no nonsense about her'—i.e., who can stand an unlimited amount of the stimulation of male companionship without becoming inflamed. This means that she is probably below par sexually. In girls it also leads to a preference for the male who 'does not remind them that they are women' or, as I recently heard a misguided girl declare, 'who does not look upon me as a woman'. This means an oblique bias in favour of low sexuality in mating, which necessarily causes great unhappiness in marriage, quite apart from its deleterious effect on the race.

The same bias also creates a phobia against beauty because, since sexual intercourse with a healthy, good-looking specimen is of course known to be more enjoyable than with an ugly, unhealthy specimen, it is felt to be more sinful. Hence the slanders flung at beauty by all Christian fanatics …

Thirdly, Christian sexphobia has so poisoned the art of life that for the first time in history a generation of men has arisen which, by its lack of sex-mastery, has weaned woman from her primary and fundamental pastime. Getting no ‘kick’ out of sex (a fact they will admit in private), they naturally turn to other interests.

Fourthly, in Anglo-Saxon countries, which have suffered most from Christianity, there has been no attempt to organize suitable conditions to enable young men of all classes to enjoy safe sex-experience before marriage. Most young men consequently postpone their first normal heterosexual intercourse much too long, sometimes until marriage.

This has a threefold effect:

(a) It rears monsters who may be guaranteed to alienate the most passionate girl from sex after their first twenty-four hours of clumsy, ignorant experimentation upon her. In fact, it makes sexual congress as unattractive as the most rabid puritan could wish to have it.

(b) It leads to an enormous amount of auto-eroticism, which again causes matrimonial misery. For the girl who gets one of these chaste young men usually marries an habitual masturbator.

(c) It makes healthy young men too eager in love, so that they grossly exaggerate the desirability of a particular sexual object. Horrified by his choice, and unable to see the girl through the sex-starved man’s transfiguring glasses, his friends and relatives exclaim, ‘Love is indeed blind’. But this is ignorance. It is not love, but lack of love, that is blind. Tumescence is blind, especially when it has not been relieved except guiltily for years and years.

This of course leads to a good deal of dysgenic and ill-assorted mating. The boy thinks the girl a goddess, but he is not really sane. The subjective momentum in him, driving him to the sexual object, is so powerful that those about him, not suffering from his unrelieved tumescence, cannot understand his mania, and are not surprised when later on he comes round to their adverse view of the girl. But this of course means a disastrous marriage.

Now, normal pre-nuptial intercourse would obviously remove this evil, but it is important to insist that such sexual experience should not destroy the fillip that desire for a particular girl, chosen with greater sanity, gives to ambition in young men. And it should not jeopardize their health.

What about girls?

> In a young nubile female, inexperienced in sex, there is no such thing as chronic mechanical tension aching for relief. There is a subjective momentum towards the male, but it becomes rather less than more discriminate with sexual intercourse. Indeed, the danger with the female is that the first sexual experience with an undesirable and unequal mate may increase rather than lessen her attachment. Besides which, when once the process of procreation is engaged, the instinct is gratified …
>
> This is not to say that women are less sensual or less able to enjoy sexual intercourse than men, although these conclusions have been quite unjustifiably drawn by many from the circumstance that the unspoilt virgin does not consciously pursue the male for sexual relief. Woman is normally just as sexual as man; often, in my opinion, more so. She is just as able to enjoy her sex experience and no less seriously injured than he is by a long wait after puberty before normal functioning begins. (*The Choice of a Mate*, pp. 30–5)
>
> As I have shown … the Christian regards beauty as dangerous because it is a lure to life and the pleasures of life. A beautiful woman, like a fine man, stimulates the instincts of procreation. Now this is of course very wicked, according to Christian notions, seeing that sexual intercourse was the original sin of mankind. The consequence is that, wherever Christianity has prevailed, ugly people have been favoured and regarded as particularly safe and holy, because in them there was no emphatic lure to sin, to life, to procreation. Inevitably, therefore, Christianity was bound to imagine its own highest man, Christ, as ugly, and … it did not scruple to do this. In this way, Christianity has exerted a powerful influence in favour of ugliness, and hence in favour of degeneracy and disease. (*The Choice of a Mate,* p. 165)

Inbreeding

In the choice of a mate, one of the first questions that arises is, shall my mate be like me or unlike? …

What do we actually find lovers doing when they first wish to convince each other that they love, without, however, uttering the fatal words? Do they not subject each other to a most searching examination regarding all their habits of mind and body, from the literature each favours to the kind of food each prefers?

‘Oh, you like that? So do I!’ This is the incessant joyous refrain of the first ardent conversations, when each is secretly longing to tell the other that love has already been kindled.

‘How funny that you should like eating the rind of oranges! So do I! How strange! You like the *Sankhayana-Brahmanas*? So do I! How funny that you should always have stood up for vulgar old Clacton-on-Sea! I have always loved it!’ Etc.

We have all held such conversations. We have all lied unscrupulously in trying to keep the two tastes absolutely identical. And we have all glowed when, at the end of the catechism, it became abundantly clear to both that there was not a single point, except perhaps the best material for knickers, on which we differed.

What does this mean? It is very deep and very unconscious, because everybody does it. Even those do it who consciously protest that they believe in marrying one’s opposite. Does it mean that there is a primitive instinct in men, as there is in animals, to choose their like and to rejoice when their like has been found? And does not all this catechizing about tastes indicate that there is also a desire to make certain that the instinct has been gratified?

Readers may object that it is a matter of pure caution to determine the tastes of a person with whom you may have to live. But it is much more than that. It is not an examination for discovering the tastes of the prospective partner. This is merely incidental. It is the expression of a desire to demonstrate that, no matter what the prospective partner’s tastes are, one shares them with him or her. It is not an inquiry in which tastes are approved or disapproved, but in which the similarity of tastes alone is approved. It is the outcome of an unconscious, not a conscious, motive. Because very often, I repeat, he who indulges in such a fire of cross-questioning will in the next breath consciously and foolishly declare that he disbelieves in the desirability of similar tastes in spouses, and thinks life would be very dull if everybody thought alike, and so on—in fact, the

customary twaddle of democratic, disputatious and restless social conditions.

I take it that this fire of cross-questioning, with the joy that follows every proof of similarity, is an indication that beneath the unhealthy democratic veneer there is a natural impulse, which we possess in common with the animals, to pursue our like. And that, even when we have been misguided enough to choose a mate that is unlike, we try, at least in the spirit, to establish identity of tastes and a common matrix. (*The Choice of a Mate,* pp. 43–4)

What is the innermost conviction of a man or girl who says that one must choose one's opposite?

If the statement is deliberate, and not said for a joke, or by way of thoughtlessly repeating a popular tag, does it not indicate a desire for correction? I mean, for the correction of one's stock or individual qualities, whether physical or psychological? And where there is a desire for correction, may there not be self-contempt, inferiority feelings—in fact, doubts as to one's general desirability?

A creature proud of his stock's desirable acquired characteristics does not seek an opposite, a correction, which in his children would nullify or adulterate the object of his pride. Why should he? In fact, as we shall soon see, there appears to be an instinct implanted in all sound animals and races of men to segregate and hold themselves aloof the moment they have distinguished themselves from the rest by acquisition.

Only the unsound, the self-despising, have the instinct to seek correction or modification in marriage. Hence, possibly, the popularity of the idea of dissimilars mating in degenerate times. Those people, too, who feel that they are much removed from the mean of their stock or their nation, and are conscious of being odd, will tend to look for means of modifying their eccentricities in their children by the choice of a mate who displays characteristics unlike their own.

The sound, average person, however, tends to seek his like and to shun his opposite, not merely out of instinct but consciously, out of a desire to preserve his stock's achievements in quality. He seeks his like, moreover, because, if he is an intelligent observer of his fellows, he knows that there are reasons enough for discord in marriage without multiplying them unduly by the selection of a mate who, by morphology and temperament

(which means, by insuperable and unmodifiable fundamentals), must disagree with him in hundreds of things.

Those who, in this connection, argue that life is made interesting by disagreements are romantics without any knowledge of the fierce light which intimacy sheds on the smallest divergence from the life-partner, and of the exasperation that such divergences are wont to cause.

Married life is not parliamentary life. It is not an institution for diverting the nation with its quarrels. Debates and differences of opinion, especially those based on psychophysical differences, do not as a rule lead to much entertainment or jollity in married life. It is important, therefore, apart from any biological reasons which may be adduced hereafter, and merely for the sake of peace and the durability of the mutual affection, to choose one's like in mating, unpopular though the doctrine may seem in these anarchical and democratic days. (*The Choice of a Mate,* pp. 45–6)

[W]hen … I contemplate any great work of man, I regard it as the product of the man as a whole, not merely of his invisible side. If, therefore, he happens to be botched or bungled, I expect to find his botchedness reflected in his work, as it always is. If I see conflict and disorder in his creation, I look for conflict and disorder in his whole being, not only in his so-called 'mind'.

Contemplating the problems of health and culture on this non-magic basis, I find *a priori* that culture—in so far as it is social harmony and order, healthy and enduring—must be the product of an ordered, harmonious, healthy man. And if I turn my eyes from the social chaos of today back to the origins of the most harmonious and healthiest cultures, I suspect without inquiry that the people who created these cultures must have been unlike us at least in this: that they were harmoniously constituted and vigorously healthy. They were beautiful, harmonious and wholesome: consequently, their creations could not help being beautiful, harmonious and wholesome.

Turning now from these *a priori* conclusions to facts, what do we find? We find not only that these early cultures were actually very harmonious but also that their vigour and power must have been very great, for our culture owes what little beauty, harmony and health it possesses entirely to them.

A further interesting fact is that all these cultures arose in naturally or artificially confined areas, where broadmindedness, the universal brotherhood of mankind, internationalism, the love of one's neighbour, and other forms of claptrap were quite unknown. We find these cultures originally in islands like Crete and Japan; peninsulas like India, Greece and Italy; naturally enclosed areas like Peru, Mesopotamia and Egypt, and artificially enclosed areas like China and ancient Palestine.

Furthermore, we know that where intercourse with the outside world, with the neighbour, is checked, the secluded people are condemned to inbreeding and very often close inbreeding—that is to say, at any rate, to a form of mating which brings like to like. In the only cultures that have left a permanent mark on the world, we find, however, not merely inbreeding but also a strong conscious tendency to keep apart, to segregate. And this caused, in addition to a frontier of prejudice and suspicion between the secluded nation and the world outside, a series of frontiers within the nation itself, dividing off classes and castes. So that within the inbred mass smaller inbred classes were formed.

This was so among the Egyptians, the Jews, the Hindus and the Peruvians. In all these cases it was an unconscious instinct to separate, or a conscious pride of race and caste, that caused the segregation. The same seems to have been true of the ancient inhabitants of these islands and their Germanic invaders … Among the peoples principally responsible for our civilization—the Egyptians, the Jews, the Greeks and the Saxons—the abhorrence of the stranger was so great that in some cases their very word for stranger was a word of opprobrium. And each of these peoples was not only inbred but also incestuous. (*The Choice of a Mate,* pp. 51–5)

To refer briefly only to England here may seem trifling, but for the benefit of the English-speaking reader it may be of interest to state that there seems little doubt that the English were once, and for a long period of their history, probably standardized. For apart from other evidence we have of this, we also know that, incredible as it may now seem to modern people, the English were once upon a time a good-looking nation.[22] And this fact alone argues an established harmony of features which … involves the likelihood of a corresponding harmony in the constitution. (*The Four Pillars of Health*, pp. 21–2)

Those who claim that races which are the result of a cross, or of several crosses, are usually superior belong also to that section of the modern world which, obsessed with the error that inbreeding is *per se* deleterious, imprudently assume that out- or mixed-breeding must necessarily be advantageous.

Truth to tell, however, … there is no essential virtue about out- or mixed-breeding. Those desirable qualities not already present in the parental stocks are not likely to be created by any amount of crossing or re-crossing, while those that are there are only likely to be attenuated and diluted. Even when heterosis produces favourable qualities, we must remember that these are not spontaneously created by the mere act of crossing two inbred stocks alone. They are but intensifications of pre-existing qualities.

Nobody would claim that the incessant crossing between innumerable races that has been going on in the Levant or in South America, ever since the ancient Greeks and the ancient Peruvians ceased to exist, has produced stocks anything like as desirable as these two inbred peoples. Nobody would claim that modern North America, with its hotchpotch of races, is superior to ancient inbred Egypt. Nor would anybody in his senses ever expect anything like the greatness from the United States that Egypt is known to have achieved.

There cannot, therefore, be any virtue in crossing *per se*, and those who claim that there is speak without authority and in contradiction of the assembled facts. (*The Choice of a Mate*, p. 118)

Physiognomy

Most of the great novelists, including Dickens, Scott and Balzac, were believers in physiognomy …

It is of course true that the long neglect in Christian countries of human ‘points’, and the strong prejudice of Socratic and Christian tradition (backed by all the unpleasant-looking people on earth[23]) against judging men by their visible aspects, have, apart from legislation, impaired all native human skill and knowledge regarding physiognomy, so that only the very few are now able to rely even on their instinctive reactions in this matter. But this, again, does not mean that the knowledge is not there to be learnt or that there is no such thing as a correlation between appearance and inner nature. It merely means that owing to a false philosophic and religious doctrine—widely circulated, greatly welcome to a vast number of people and almost

universally held until a century ago—mankind in civilized countries has neglected to learn or elaborate the alphabet of that mute language which is personal appearance.

Nevertheless, widely as the belief is still held among thousands of ignorant and pious people that appearance counts for nothing, even those who hold it most rigidly constantly betray in their unguarded daily routine that, deep down, they have an instinctive belief in the correlation of the visible and the invisible man. For instance, the average puritan, who would indignantly deny the claims of physiognomists like Aristotle, Lavater and Schopenhauer, would think it quite natural for his daughter, on returning from a dance, to declare that she had fallen in love at first sight. Nor would he scruple, on inspecting the young man on the following Sunday, to say that he did not like the 'look' of him at all. And yet his daughter only fell in love with him by impressions entirely physiognomical, and he himself judges the young man adversely along entirely similar lines. (*The Choice of a Mate*, pp. 158–60)

In the choice of a mate, therefore, we must act on the assumption that appearance counts for a very great deal, that it is a language that can be read with a certain amount of accuracy and yields reliable information concerning the invisible qualities behind the visible facade.

But it is of the utmost importance, in applying this conclusion in our daily lives, always to bear in mind the consequences of the two rules … which may now be paraphrased as follows:

> (1) That in an individual who is like the other members of his or her stock, whose stock does not show much variation and who is therefore not improbably the outcome of inbreeding, appearance is a very certain guide to character and disposition.
>
> (2) That in an individual who is unlike the other members of his or her stock, whose stock shows marked variation and who is therefore not improbably grossly crossbred, appearance is not such a very certain and reliable guide to character and disposition. (*The Choice of a Mate,* p. 162)

Beauty

[L]ooks, however beautiful, are not in themselves a sufficient guarantee of desirability, the reason being that in the permutations and combinations of the developmental factors a good-looking person may be just a lucky

stroke in an undesirable stock—that is to say, despite his or her prepossessing exterior, he or she may come from undesirable stock and therefore bear in his or her germ-plasm undesirable recessive genes. Hence the wise Norwegian proverb: ‘Never marry a girl who is the only beauty in her family’.

Having found a beautiful person as a likely mate, it is therefore essential to know the stock of that good-looking person before choosing the latter as a mate. (*The Choice of a Mate,* pp. 153–4)

For the sake of the reader who is fresh to the study of the aesthetic values ‘ugly’ and ‘beautiful’ as they relate to humanity, particularly in mating, it ought … to be pointed out that when used interracially these words have not only no necessarily aesthetic significance but also no necessarily morbid or other implication. When a fair young Parisian lady, confronted by a Negro waiter, exclaims ‘Dieu qu’il est laid!’,[24] or when a fair Cockney girl, meeting with a Chinaman, mutters under her breath ‘Christ, what a clock!’, it is surely obvious that the word ‘ugly’ (implied in the second remark) can have no aesthetic or morbid implication. It is merely the instinctive reaction of one race to the ideal of another, a reaction by which that ideal is rejected.

It is only when races grow unhealthy, sophisticated, lose their taste and allow their sound instincts to be corrupted that the word ‘ugly’ can be used interracially (from the mating standpoint) to imply a recognition of morbidity. Otherwise the word used interracially means *in extenso* merely this: ‘You may be sound and all right as a Negro or a Chinaman, but to me you are repulsive and therefore to be rejected’.

As we shall see in a moment, every race postulates its own highest examples as the standard of absolute beauty. A race uncorrupted and sound must, therefore, pronounce the word ‘ugly’ in regard to all other racial standards of beauty (and this it does and always has done), otherwise its mating judgements would amount in practice to bringing about the evanescence of its own race, an end which … no healthy race desires.

Consequently, it is only within the same race that ‘ugly’ should have implications of psychophysical abnormality and morbidity. Though this too requires some explanation, because ‘ugly’, even within the same race, often acquires peculiar connotations unconnected with morbidity.

For instance, in a mild, urban and rather effeminate culture the word ‘ugly’ is often carelessly used to reject a person whose only stigma is that

his or her face is more severe, more stern, more ferocious or more sensual than the average face in the community, without, however, manifesting any signs of that congenital disproportion, disharmony or asymmetry which indicates biological inferiority and from which ill-health or a faulty constitution, combined with mental instability, may be inferred.

I have come across so many examples of this that it seems to be worthwhile to dwell on the matter a moment. ‘Ugly’ used in this way cannot have any implications of morbidity. It is simply an offensive comment on someone unlike the person making it, and it is a further indication of the instinctive tendency of like to mate with like.

Ferocity, severity, sternness or sensuality are no more necessarily ‘ugly’ than lack of these qualities in a face, provided they are not accompanied by the disproportion and disharmony above described. Evidences of great passion in a person’s features also often provoke the comment ‘ugly’ in smug, middle-class folk whose passions have all been bred out. I have actually come across a mother who, confronted with a picture of unusual passion in the features of one of her daughters (possibly the only one to have collected up in her person all the passion of the rather passionless stock), described this one daughter as ugly and the rest as pretty.

Here again, ‘ugly’ can have no necessarily morbid connotation. It is simply an ignorant manner of commenting on a personal appearance which promises to reintroduce into a smug, safety-first home the disturbing element of a great passion.

In the same manner, the inter-class and inter-caste use of the word ‘ugly’ need not necessarily have any morbid implication. When an aristocratic woman calls a coarse ploughboy or a blowsy dairymaid ‘ugly’, and the latter, gazing at the aristocrat and her children, pronounces the same word, it need not have any condemnatory value from the aesthetic or health point of view. What happens is this: the aristocrat, thinking subjectively, says ‘that ploughboy and that dairymaid do not comply with my standard of beauty, therefore they are ugly’. And the other class thinks the same.

To fail to feel sexual stimulation in contemplating even a beauty of another race or class may legitimately provoke the comment ‘ugly’, but in such cases it is important to appreciate the limitations of the word. An aristocrat cannot imagine the amount of coarseness and sensuality a

workman may need in his mate to satisfy his sexual desire; neither can a workman imagine what an aristocrat needs …

In mating, we are not concerned with the superficial disfigurement of a temporary illness, accident or fight: we are chiefly concerned with the ‘ugliness’ indicating some deleterious factors in the germ-plasm, revealed by constitutional and physiognomical disharmonies in the individual. It is this sort of ugliness alone that cannot and must not be excused, and, left to themselves and unbiased by unhealthy values, sound women usually detect and reject a mate betraying it.

When, therefore, Caroline Schlegel in one of her letters hastily concludes from Sophie’s love of Mirabeau that ‘what women love in men is certainly not beauty’, she is writing nonsense. If, as a rule, women fail to be sexually stimulated by the so-called ‘barber’s model’ sort of man, it is not because they are unsusceptible to masculine beauty but because such beauty as the barber’s model possesses is frequently effeminate, and more rugged and more stern features in the male are often and quite erroneously regarded by an effeminate age as ‘ugly’. To argue from this, however, that women are not concerned with congenital male beauty, denoting biological superiority, is fallacious. (*The Choice of a Mate,* pp. 168–71)

[S]eeing that there can be no such thing as biological inferiority without correspondingly objectionable traits in the psyche, ugly people should be avoided because, as a general rule, they have ugly minds …

The inferiority feelings of the ugly person also make him or her resentful, and resentful people are torn by conflicts. They long to ‘pay someone out’ for what they resent and their attachment to, and dependence upon, those about them often makes it difficult for them to do so. Like the kitten whose tail is pinched by accident, and who turns to bite the guiltless soft cushion at its side, so the resentful person will if possible annoy or ill-treat those closest to him or her, simply because they happen to be sentient creatures at hand and ‘someone must suffer for what I am suffering’.

If the sentient creatures near at hand happen to be powerful, and the resentful person is dependent on them, then someone outside the intimate circle will be selected as a victim, as the ‘cause’ of the resentful person’s misery.

Now this makes ugly people difficult to live with, quite apart from the fact that their congenital ugliness in itself … presupposes mental discord

and emotional conflict, hence instability of some kind. They are people not only at war with the world but also at war with themselves. (*The Choice of a Mate*, pp. 172–3)

The healthy man or woman is contented and serene; neither is constantly tempted to blame or envy his or her human environment when he or she feels wretched. The sick, on the other hand, are very prone, particularly if they are largely unconscious, despite all the reasoning in the world, to envy their human environment and to hold it not altogether blameless for their pain and discomfort. This makes them much more difficult to deal with than healthy people, quite apart from the deadly boredom of illness in the home and its appalling expense, and quite apart too from the psychological conflicts and aberrations which are usually the necessary accompaniment of a sick, inharmonious and ugly body.

Hence Manu's wise words on this matter. 'If the wife', he says, 'is radiant with beauty, the whole house is bright, but if she is destitute of beauty, all will appear dismal'.

Perhaps also this is why Shakespeare says: 'Beauty lives with kindness'. For beauty, being harmony, symmetry and health, is, as we have seen, less likely than ugliness to be associated with unkindness.

In this sense, and in defiance of accepted middle-class morality, it must be pointed out that it is a much greater blessing to live with a 'sinful' person than with an unhealthy person, for the true devil in this world is not 'sin' but morbidity and ill-health. I have known scores of 'sinful' people in my life, but not one of them has shown a hundredth part of that genius for spreading gloom, bitterness and boredom about which invalids invariably and almost always unconsciously display. That is why all the modern fostering and promoting of disease and debility, through the excessive medical succour of degenerates and subnormal children and adults, is preparing a regular inferno of irascibility, tedium and unkindness for generations to come. (*The Choice of a Mate*, pp. 192–3)

By [positiveness] I mean the general character of a human constitution that says 'yea' to life, and accepts it eagerly, interestedly, lovingly, with all its light and shade.

Thus, I describe the positive man, like the positive girl, as being eager for life's fray, life's deepest experiences, life's joys and even life's pains. They are so enamoured of life that they do not reckon up its shadows, and no

pang, no anguish, however severe, can make them swing suddenly in the direction of negativeness—i.e., to say ‘nay’ to life and adopt an attitude of embittered criticism and disapproval towards life’s plan.

In a sentence, the positive person wishes for more and more life, while in his heart of hearts the negative person wishes for less life.

All people, as they age, tend to grow negative to some extent. But the positive septuagenarian never attains to the degree of negativism reached by his naturally negative contemporary.

Nor is positiveness to be confused with a licentious or debauched nature, as puritans would like to confuse it. The principal characteristic of positiveness is that it is a feature of exuberant health in a certain kind of body, which I shall describe, and consequently he who displays positiveness possesses an intuitive measure of satisfaction and gratification beyond which his appetites refuse to go. He has an instinct regarding sufficiency which is lacking in the unbalanced libertine of both sexes.

Puritans, ascetics, people below parity in general health, and those who, by nature and endowment, feel resentful towards life and their fellows tend to be negative. Negative, too, are very old people, in whom the memory of the years of their healthiest functioning has died away. Plato, for instance, became negative in old age. ‘Le diable se fait hermite’[25] is the popular French proverb relating to this well-known phenomenon.

Positive people, even in comparative youth, may also become negative as the result of an affront directed by circumstances at their deepest impulses. Thus … owing to the revolt of her organism against life’s chief disappointment a very positive spinster may acquire a bitterly negative attitude to life and her fellows. Hence the number of ‘impossible’ spinsters in countries like France and Italy, where positiveness is more common than in the North. In the North, the negative spinster, who has always had a tincture of negativeness in her constitution, is less venomous and seems and is more content with her lot, the reason being that her disappointment has been infinitely less severe.

Thus the contented spinster is really a monstrous phenomenon, peculiar to countries with a negative ideal. This does not mean that the constitutionally negative and contented spinster is not likely to inveigh against the world, the flesh and the devil, but merely that she is likely to do

so with less hatred, less mortal vindictiveness than the positive woman whom circumstances have made negative.

In the matter of mating, however, it is important to choose the positive person because, owing to the fact that he or she is in love with life, such a person is more likely to be an inspiring, courageous, helpful and cheerful mate, throughout all life's ups and downs, than the person who starts out with a bitter taste on his or her tongue in regard to the whole of life's drama.

I think this is a vitally important and useful distinction. The question is, how can this invisible quality of positiveness be inferred from the visible exterior of a prospective mate?

If we consider the equations, Positiveness = Yea to life = More life, and Negativeness = Nay to life = Less life = Death, I think we obtain a reliable clue to the visible aspects of the positive person. For what is death? Is it not rigidity, immobility, stiffness? And is not life flexibility, mobility and suppleness?

I am convinced that the basic constitutional quality of the positive person is to be sought in this antithesis. I have always found positive people possess the following visible and noticeable characters:

Their features are very mobile. They cannot smile without something moving as high up in the face as the temples. In conversation, almost every feature moves. Their expressions are eager. They easily grow grave and intent, however, when any life matter is being discussed. They are usually grave when eating because this is an important vital activity. They are intensely earnest when the equally important instinct of sex is roused in them. There is a display of generosity in the mould and quality of their features. Nature seems to have had more than enough material with which to make them, so that they have no mean or scamped feature. Their mouths are always full size, without necessarily being large to the point of vulgarity. Their lips are full and those of the female usually everted. Their hand, without being limp or asthenic, is flexible and elastic, and its whole skeleton can easily be made to roll on itself, as it were. When they hold anything, or adjust anything, it will be noticed that their hands mould themselves to the object or task—i.e., lose the shape displayed at rest much more noticeably than other people's hands. And this characteristic lasts beyond childhood. They tend to have large and not pinched nostrils, and are good breathers. Their whole bodies seem to be elastic and their gait,

therefore, has a springy, resilient character. The general impression of their personalities is one of warmth. Although they may be very fair and have blue eyes and be devoid of high colour in their cheeks, their lack of pigmentation is reminiscent less of snow or parchment than of cigar-ash, behind which there lurks a glow.

As to their invisible characters, they easily forget incidents or facts which tend to impair or depress their lively interest in humanity and their love of their fellows. Like their digestive tracts, their minds easily digest an experience and get rid of its non-essentials, particularly if the latter are life-poisoning. In childhood, their positiveness or yea-saying makes them accessible and friendly to too many things and therefore has to be curbed and disciplined. But it is difficult to inculcate upon them the Christian notion of ‘sin’.

Negative people, on the other hand, have the following visible and noticeable characters:

Their features are rigid. If they smile, the expression causes no general commotion in their features, but tends to be limited to the mouth. In conversation, their lips alone seem to be working without the participation of any other features. Their expressions are calm and reminiscent of observers, watchers, rather than of interested collaborators. They listen as if they disapproved, although they may not disapprove. They do not become animated when questions of life are discussed. Their faces, generally impassible, show flickerings of approval when any indictment of life is made, of which the positive person does not understand the first syllable. Their mouths are usually small and their lips thin and never everted. They never have thin lips with a large mouth, however. Their hands tend to be stiff and lacking in flexibility and their shape at rest is retained in movements much more constantly than those of positive people. The skeleton of their hands cannot be rolled on itself. They tend to have small or pinched nostrils, and are not such good breathers as the positive people. Their whole body seems to be lacking in resilience or buxomness and their gait tends to be stiff, jerky and lacking in spring.

As to their invisible characters, their interest is aroused chiefly by subjects remote from human life: abstract speculations, metaphysical problems, rigid legislative and sometimes mathematical questions. They treat neither food nor sex very seriously and would like to do without both.

They do not easily forget an incident, particularly if they can distil from it some argument against life. They tend to treasure up the morbid, non-essential by-products of their mental digestion, just as their bowel often fails to rid them of the non-essential by-products of their food. They easily absorb the Christian doctrine of ‘sin’.

These are the visible and invisible manifestations of the two types.

Owing to their position at the opposite end of life to old age, all children tend to be more or less positive. A child who shows immobility of the facial muscles early and at puberty may be classed at once as undesirable for mating because, as such a child ages, its already apparent negativeness will tend only to increase.

It is important to bear this in mind. It is also important to learn to distinguish genuine or native from spurious or affected positiveness. Young people, particularly the negative ones, are envious. As, therefore, positiveness is very lovable, and positive young people, owing to their warmth, score great successes with their seniors, young people who tend to negativeness will often deliberately imitate the eager manner and gestures of their positive friends and associates, particularly when dealing with their elders.

If, however, their features are closely watched, it will be found that there is one thing they have neither observed nor are able easily to render and that is the extreme mobility of the facial muscles, which is the leading feature of their positive fellows. (*The Choice of a Mate*, pp. 248–52)

Overpopulation

It cannot be repeated too often to thinkers like Mr Harold Cox, Dean Inge and Dr Marie Stopes, all of whom are advocates of systematic birth control, that … their alleged remedy for the evils of overpopulation would work in precisely the opposite direction to that which they anticipate.

Unless they take the view that the state has the right to determine who shall and who shall not have offspring—and we do not read this extreme standpoint in their works—all birth control depending upon the voluntary use of contraceptives must inevitably lead to racial suicide. And why is this so? Because birth control is a precaution that naturally appeals to the more prudent, the more intelligent, the more self-denying and the more desirable sections of the population, and where it is encouraged and promoted only the lowest and most undesirable sections of the population will be left as

unrestricted and unlimited multipliers. (‘The Conservative programme: a further suggestion’, p. 603)

Nothing can be done … and nothing ought to be thought, about the problem of overpopulation before:

> (a) It is extricated from the problem of degeneracy, which disfigures and obscures it.
>
> (b) Degeneracy is rigorously combated and removed.

We can trust neither ourselves nor others so long as we know that we are either acute or subacute examples of modern degeneracy, and, seeing that the hordes of acute degenerates alone are so vast at the present moment that a reduction in their numbers would constitute an immense reduction in our burdens, the most prudent, the safest and the only justifiable way to set about solving the question of overpopulation is to proceed drastically with the elimination of the undesirable. Since sparing them means sacrificing their betters, since pity for them means cruelty towards their betters, and since accumulating and preserving them imposes such intolerable burdens on their betters that the latter cannot be allowed to breed, we must boldly rid ourselves of the feminine and morbid sentimentality which, long enough, has caused us to sacrifice the greater for the less, the sound for the unsound, and deliberately turn our minds to the purging of society of its human foulness. Our whole attitude towards sacrifice must be freed from the narrow, short-sighted and reckless pity of the benighted busybody who has ruled long enough. The noblest pity today should express itself in the will to succour the dwindling minority consisting of our remaining sound elements, and to save them from contamination, compulsory limitation and extermination by the hordes of the unsound. People who think otherwise must be made to see their heartless cruelty, the brutality of that lump which they feel in their throats at the spectacle of the botched. Their callousness to the higher claims of the sound must be brought home to them in private and in public, and they must begin to feel a new form of shame—the shame that supervenes when a man recognizes that his previous habits of thought have been only a kind of self-indulgence. (*The Night-Hoers*, pp. 248–9)

Even if we take the view, which as freethinkers we probably must, that this command [to ‘be fruitful and multiply’] was transferred by the priestly leader or leaders of a flourishing and stalwart race to the lips of their God, after having been conceived in their own ambitious souls, it does not reduce its significance for us but, on the contrary, rather increases it. For then we

are compelled to see in it not the arbitrary pronouncement of a deity outside human aspirations, but the expression of a yea-saying and proudly self-confident spirit within a section of mankind itself. We are compelled to suppose that a healthy, buoyant and self-trusting people, believing in its own lofty destiny, believing in its right to ‘subdue’ the earth and replenish it, and, above all, feeling itself entirely free from those paralysing doubts about its own desirability and privileges, which come over communities, like individuals, only when degeneracy and decay have laid a hold upon their minds and bodies, must feel and express themselves in this way. We are constrained to regard this divine ordinance merely as a symptom of a people’s vigour, self-reliance and self-approval. And as such it is extremely instructive, because it leads to the conclusion that possibly—nay, most probably—when once this alleged divine behest to multiply ceases to be believed in, some other belief has gone, some other faith has already disappeared—the belief and faith a people has in itself and its own desirability. (*The Night-Hoers*, pp. 192–3)

Selection

As to the actual means whereby degeneracy is to be combated and removed, we would suggest that:

> (1) The sanctity of human life be redefined in accordance with some standard of physical and mental desirability. Only that life should have sanctity which offers some guarantee of future worthiness. Infant life, therefore, should be sacred only to the extent to which it represents desirable life. All acute cases of malformation, degenerative stigmata, crippledom, abnormality should unhesitatingly be done away with …
>
> (2) The murderer does less harm to society than the incurable lunatic or other sufferer, because while the murderer kills only one fellow-man, the incurable sufferer, by the continuous burden he imposes on all, prevents the life of hundreds of his fellow-creatures. Out of pity for the sound, therefore, we ought to be able to put painlessly away all incurable sufferers, just as we do incurable sufferers among animals. Surely it would be the greatest mercy both to the sufferers and to their sound contemporaries. The huge mansions and palaces strewn all over England for the upkeep of human foulness, and maintained at the cost of scores of millions of pounds each year, should become homes for the recreation of the sound and for the better enjoyment of life by the sound …

(3) Marriage between all defectives and degenerates should be forbidden by law, and the law should be strictly enforced. At present even the statutory supervision of mental defectives, which is provided for by legislation, is so carelessly carried out that large numbers of these undesirables find opportunities to breed in spite of it … And in order to enlist the help and sympathy of the poor in preparing such legislation we must make it as rigorous for the defectives among the rich and well-to-do as for the defectives among the indigent.

(4) We must apply our energy and scientific knowledge to studying much more closely than we have done hitherto the symptomology of desirability in infants, so that there may be some means of selecting desirable children at birth. The science of human 'points' must be brought at least up to the level at which animal connoisseurs have brought the points of horses, cattle, dogs, etc. Ultimately this science must far surpass the degree of perfection at which it is now found in animal connoisseurship. And all those who know so little about the interdependence of physical and psychical qualities as to retort with the familiar tag that 'human beings cannot be dealt with on the lines of a stud-farm' should be invited to study the subject a little more closely, and above all to study the records of the world's greatest men with less *parti pris* than hitherto. But in nine cases out of ten it will be found that such people have studied nothing and are merely repeating a phrase they have heard or read.

(5) Values must be transformed, so that beauty, which always goes with health and vigour (only tasteless people call pallid, delicate, fireless looks 'beautiful'), is more highly valued than it is today and so that abnormality and ugliness may provoke not pity but repugnance. No elimination of degenerates can possibly do any good, unless at the same time a change in taste is effected which will make it impossible for any girl or man to look fondly, as the hero and heroine in [Bulwer-Lytton's] *Pilgrims of the Rhine* do, upon physical imperfection.

(6) For a while, contraceptives might be sold as some poisons are now, only on a doctor's prescription, and it might be made a criminal offence to pass them on, just as it is a criminal offence to hand on morphia or cocaine. Doctors might, in addition, be forbidden to prescribe contraceptives to any but degenerate people, and this degeneracy could be determined, as it was during the [First World]

War, by careful auscultation and other methods of examination. C3 people might even be compelled to use contraceptives, so that their elimination could be gradually effected without disturbing that love of comfort and mental serenity which is so dear to those who set the tone in England today.

(7) In any case, it might be made a criminal offence to sell contraceptives without a doctor's prescription, while the sale or handling on of contraceptives to desirable and sound couples might be as severely punished as at the present day we punish attempts at poisoning.

These, or measures like them, might be adopted straight away and continue to be put in force until we have rid ourselves at least of the most acute forms of degeneracy, whereupon milder measures might gradually rid us of the subacute forms.

But it may be questioned whether the standard demanded even by this solution is not too high, whether it is not too late and whether we are not too far gone in degeneracy to show the necessary firmness and vigour to adopt such means as would be necessary to solve the problem of overpopulation in this way. At all events, no other solution recommends itself so well, no other solution lies so completely in our power or is so perfectly commensurate with our knowledge and our present condition. And if we insist on turning to easier and more convenient proposals, we may find out too late that they were less solutions than anodynes, less remedies than palliatives, and then there may no longer be any hope of a solution.

As to what a regenerate England, a population of wholly sound people, would do to deal with their problem of overpopulation—that is a question which it is quite impossible to answer. How the brain of modern man will work when he has rid himself and his environment of degeneracy, what he will consider wise or unwise, how can we pretend to know? It is only when we recognize how deeply degeneracy affects not only our health but also our thought, that we can measure the full extent of our present inability to foresee what such a future may hold in store. But this inability to read what future, regenerate England may do in order to solve her problem of overpopulation need not disturb us now. For our urgent and immediate programme is too plain, too pressing, to be overlooked, and incidentally it happens also to be at least a temporary solution of our problem of overpopulation. (*The Night-Hoers,* pp. 250–5)

Our eyes, corrupted by long habituation to the inferior in human form, react so differently when we turn from the animal world to gaze on ourselves. We are so much accustomed to look on humanity unexactingly and are so blunted to the spectacle of type-mongrelization, of disorder and confusion presented by every one of our fellow-creatures; we are so familiar with subnormal health, chronic disability and defect, inferior stamina, subnormal balance, asymmetry and ugliness. Most of us are ready to accept, even as mates, creatures so far removed in quality from our pedigree spaniels, setters, fowls, horses and cattle that we have long ceased to notice how deplorable the average human being really is.

Look for any symmetry or order in the faces of modern civilized people or for any natural dignity, poise, resilience and serene exuberance; scrutinize them for any reminder, even remote, of Job's horse [Job 29.19-25] and disappointment follows.

But no-one now dreams of looking for these things. The modern world accepts without question or perplexity an amount of defectiveness in human nature to which only long and steady habituation to the sight of inferior quality in man could possibly have blinded us.

Only the fewest today, for instance, are struck with the prevailing ugliness of modern English people or with the frequency with which even what is called a 'beauty' is marred by some asymmetry or other blemish. How then could the majority be expected to notice the disquieting prevalence or the lack of harmony, serenity, comeliness and dignity?

The very blindness shown towards the mongrelization of the population, high and low, is nothing less than astonishing. It amounts to childish simplicity to suppose that mongrelization occurs only when different races mix. In England this is now probably its rarest manifestation. It occurs chiefly in healthy, sound stocks mongrelizing themselves by mating with unsound, weedy and tainted stocks; or in well-constituted and good-looking stocks mating with ill-constituted, badly-grown and repulsive stocks; or by the mating of wholly disparate types—short and stumpy with tall and slim, fat and heavy with spouses whose endocrine balance is normal, vigorous and hard mating with weakly and soft. So that ugliness becomes not merely the hereditary feature of a family line, but is created afresh in every generation and family by the confusion and chaos resulting from the jumble

of incompatible traits inherited independently from widely disparate parents.

And this reckless mongrelization, by making every individual the final and unique product of the combination of permutation of millions of odd and different traits, ends in producing a completely atomized population in which everyone is unique of his kind in some form of peculiar ugliness, ill-health or defect.

There can be no affinities, no real understanding, either of feeling or of type. Because everybody is a none-too-prepossessing *unicum*.

Nowhere, however, as already hinted above, does the romantic and gambling expectation of something for nothing display itself more conspicuously than in our still unshaken belief that quality and order can come from these modern atomized populations. It is thought that everything will be all right … if only we cultivate a ‘sense of humour’, acquire ‘unselfishness’, read our poets, try to be good democrats and above all raise the standard of living. As if quality and order were features of human life and capacity which could be conjured in from outside! (*The Quest of Human Quality,* pp. 94–5)

What … is the value of the incessant clamour raised by the advocates of legalized abortion, seeing that they consistently flourish only the low death-rate in the wholesale state abortions of Russia?

What becomes of the claim of Dr Killick Millard and his female sympathizers ‘that a [pregnant] woman should have some right to say whether she should become a mother or not’?

If granted for other reasons than those now allowed by the law (which allows induced abortions in certain diseases and conditions of the body), it would be tantamount to giving people the right to mutilate and make valetudinarians of themselves. Can there be such a right?

No! Because the wanton creation of invalidism imposes intolerable burdens (already sufficiently heavy) upon those sound workers who are supplying the services and wealth of the nation. If there is such a thing as a right to invalidism, it follows that there must be a right voluntarily to become a charge or a dependent upon your neighbour. But surely the burdens of involuntary invalidism and physiological botchedness are now sufficiently heavy to render a restriction rather than an extension of such burdens a primary and pressing need. Besides, apart from the question of

burdens, is a nation in any way improved or benefited by increasing its invalidism?

Obviously, no such right can be conceded. Even to concede the right to suicide would, from the sociological point of view, be wiser and more far-sighted. And we can therefore dismiss Dr Killick Millard's claim as only one further example added to his already recorded illogicalities.

Thus, in spite of Victor Margueritte's specious catchword, *ton corps est à toi*,[26] as a matter of fact it is not and never has been *à toi*, from the very first moment when man began to be conscious and to depend on his neighbour in sickness and disability within a gregarious horde. (*Abortion*, pp. 85–6)

To a sympathetic and understanding observer of mankind, it must be obvious that there are as many great men who have failed by a fluke or accident to be criminals, as there are criminals who have similarly failed to be great men. And to draw a hard and fast line vertically and horizontally between types, and say that criminality lies in one group and greatness and normality in the other, is pure delusion.

What would Bottomley[27] have been or done had he been rich? On the other hand, with his acknowledged youthful tendency to deception and falsehood, what would Darwin have been or done had he been wretchedly poor? Which of us who believes that an author cannot create a character *tout d'une piece* without possessing some of it in himself, doubts that the catalogue of criminals in the mythology of Dickens points to a strain of so-called criminality in Dickens himself? And who can think of Napoleon, Frederick the Great, Henry VIII, Cromwell or Castlereagh without feeling what magnificent criminals they would have made, had they had less luck? Bismarck is alleged actually to have said of himself as a student: 'I shall be either the greatest blackguard or the first man of Prussia'.

[T]he whole distinction between criminality and respectability as being respectively degenerate and regenerate, with its implication of bourgeois snobbery in Lombroso's laborious attempts at establishing a morphological or biological criminal class, reeks of the subjective and puritanical outlook on humanity—the wish to see repulsiveness where you are morally repelled—and it is not worthy of a moment's serious consideration. If the majority of crimes committed in civilized society were breaches of Nature's laws, the segregation of criminals as a biological variety might have some sense. But seeing that crime is very often—in fact, in most cases—merely a breach

of convention or man-made law, it is as absurd to regard the criminal as necessarily biologically inferior as to regard a cannibal as necessarily so. Thus, crime does not reveal biological inferiority, although it may reveal social inferiority, and, seeing that it may be and often is pursued out of sheer delight in risks which respectable employment in modern civilization cannot provide, it may actually denote a plus of spirit, courage, independence and masculinity.

Again, however, this does not mean that I am denying any connection between a certain low-bred type and a peculiar form of crime—for instance, the mental degenerate guilty of indecent assaults on children, or the masculoid female who engages in a particularly low form of prostitution. All I deny is that the love or choice of a life of crime, when it is associated with maladaptation, need necessarily be connected any more definitely with so-called stigmata of degeneration than with extreme personal beauty and biological superiority. (*The Choice of a Mate,* pp. 230–1)

Chapter 6
HEALTH

Ludovici accepted the Latin maxim of mens sana corpore sano*, and reasoned that worthwhile accomplishments in the spheres of religion, politics and art will come only from healthy people. Moreover, he analyzed human beauty as savouriness plus the exuberance of overflowing good health. Many of Ludovici's books, even those on democracy and feminism, discuss the social consequences of the maladies endemic in Western civilization. He delved into poor diet, smoking and the effect of competing in sports, among other subjects, and he established that the biological disharmony characteristic of modern people stems from like refusing to marry like (as Chapter 5 on Eugenics argues, too). Ludovici also wrote one of the first books about the Alexander Technique, a method of producing postural changes to improve well-being acclaimed by John Dewey and the Nobel laureate Niko Tinbergen. Another pioneering book,* The Secret of Laughter*, comprehensively explains why the biggest laughers tend to be the unhealthy, the miserable and the powerless.*

As for Ludovici himself, when visiting South Africa in the winter of 1968–69 a friend described him as being 'in the peak of health, with bright eyes and a good complexion'. He was close on 87 at the time. He liked to be known as Captain Ludovici (the rank he attained in the First World War), a name that suited his lean figure and upright bearing. Ending his days as a vegetarian, he lived to be 89. He rejected 'childish' sports but he loved walking for exercise, and his old neighbours can recall him, an inveterate anti-automobilist, strolling into town along the middle of the road. Incidentally, Ludovici may have hated levity in the face of grave problems, but his friends knew him as a quick-thinking wit.

National Sickness

When a proud people find their appetites and deepest passions losing their bite or their keenness, they naturally want to give their loss a high-sounding name, a name that will make it appear like an acquisition. So they call it 'self-control'. (*French Beans,* p. 115)

From a brief survey of his fellow-countrymen, there are many strange lessons to be learnt in England today by anyone who keeps his eyes open and is on his guard against taking too much for granted.

The observer has only to exchange a few words with the men, women and children he passes by, and to look into their faces; no more is required to tell him all he wishes to know. Nor will he need to have a very high standard of human beauty to feel disappointed by the features of the great majority, while the most elementary knowledge of psychology and hygiene will enable him to see from their behaviour and expressions that they are very largely harassed, unhealthy and badly fed (i.e., not starving but improperly nourished).

But among the first of the curious facts he will notice is this: that large masses of his fellow-countrymen appear to have become so thoroughly accustomed to living their lives with the help of every variety of artificial aids that the latter no longer provoke either shame or concern.

For instance, men and women, young and old, constantly pass by wearing glasses, and they look quite cheerfully and confidently up through these optical aids when they are addressed. To speak to others in the crowd, and to see them smile, is to recognize instantly that some or all of their teeth are bad or false. But they smile with just as much conviction, whether their dentition happens to be natural or manufactured. Numbers of the younger adults and children about have upon their faces, in the region of their eyes and brows, certain tiny, almost imperceptible scars, revealing the fact that they were brought into the world by means of obstetric instruments. And countless others there are whose birth was just as artificial, though they bear no marks to show it. But no-one seems to trouble or to inquire how such frequent interference with a natural function might be avoided. Everywhere, people are seen shaking hands and sincerely proclaiming themselves ‘Quite well’, when that very morning, and many previous mornings, their intestines have functioned only through the agency of some widely advertised artificial aid. But none of them feels guilty of any grave inaccuracy in declaring himself well in the circumstances.

Mothers can be seen by the hundred thousand, serenely wheeling in perambulators, or leading by the hand, infants and children, not one of whom has ever put its lips to a human breast. The advertisements recommending the artificial foods on which these infants and children have been reared can be read on every hoarding. But it never occurs either to the mothers themselves or to the children or to the onlookers to consider whether this state of affairs is of a kind that justifies so much self-complacency, good cheer, indifference and apparent contentment.

These indications of a highly standardized life, revealing almost universal imperfections of some kind in our bodies and their functions, are now so common, so much a commonplace in our midst, that nobody notices them, nobody mentions them as odd and certainly nobody seems to show any concern or alarm about their monotonous frequency. (*Lysistrata,* pp. 9-11)

Food and Drink

For some considerable time in modern Europe, doubts have been entertained and expressed about the advisability of cooking certain foods. The Holy Catholic Church, in its incomparable wisdom respecting all the material side of human life, was probably the first institution to point to the necessity of a partially raw food diet at specified moments in the year and, with all the pomp and mystery of a religious rite, to encourage its adherents to adopt such a diet at certain stated periods …

In later years, of course, with the decline of faith and the advent of Protestantism, the Catholic Church, which is the storehouse of medieval and ancient wisdom in all important matters connected with human life, began to exercise less sway and therefore found itself constrained, even in the countries that were not lost to it, to relax the rigour of its control; while in Protestant countries the reformers, not satisfied with renouncing the Pope, unfortunately for posterity were foolish enough to divorce themselves for all time from those very religious observances and exercises for which their new revolutionary programme offered them no adequate substitute. Indeed, the observance of fasts, and the practice of differentiating between certain foodstuffs, was regarded by the majority of the ignorant reformers as ‘pure superstition’ and ‘idolatry’ …

Thus it will surprise no-one to find that the science of dietetics is essentially the creation of Protestant countries, and that England, Germany and America, while producing the worst cooks, both male and female, from Alfred the Great downwards, are the peoples who have contributed most towards this new department of knowledge. (*Man’s Descent from the Gods,* pp. 82–4)

I wonder whether there is a single workman either in England or America who has ever drunk a draught of ale such as Queen Elizabeth and her ladies-in-waiting used to drink at every meal. I know there is not one—not one! But it should be remembered that the old ale of the Plantagenet and

Tudor periods kept men in a state more exuberant, more spirited, more lusty than mere everyday health; it kept them, above all, unusually potent sexually. That was what the Puritans were clever enough to detect and it was, I feel sure, by no means an accident that one of the chief adulterants of ale tolerated by the Puritans consisted of hops, from which lupulin, one of the most potent anaphrodisiacs, is extracted.

It is impossible to believe that the great fermented drinks of antiquity could have been anything but a precious boon and a godsend to men, otherwise we are forced to regard as cynics and misanthropists the races who deified the supposed original creators of them.

Read how the ancient Indian speaks of his soma; remember how the ancient Greek refers to his god Dionysus as the saviour, the healer and the liberator; study the history of mead in Scandinavia, in Persia and in Asia Minor; follow the civilization of China up to the time when it ceased to be a wine-drinking country, and compare its subsequent with its former condition; read of the Mexicans, the Peruvians, the great Babylonians and Egyptians; and even the artistic Bushmen of Africa, now, alas, almost extinct—everywhere, among all peoples, you will find civilization, art, culture only where the health- and spirit-giving beverages of nature's fermented fruit and grain have made such achievements possible … (*Man's Descent from the Gods*, pp. 155–6)

Sports and Games

It is in the middle and richer classes that men are most bloodless, most fireless, most 'gentlemanly'—in fact, most exasperating from the standpoint of the passionate and vigorous girl. It is the men of this class who have borne the whole burden of turning the Anglo-Saxon female away from life as a life-interest. Behold them in their homes and their clubs! They are so well-polished and scraped and scented as to have lost every feature of the animal.

They are so well-drilled and dragooned as to have lost all vital impulse and roughness, and they are so completely cowed by puritanism as to have forgotten every trace of that innocence in passion which alone makes passion innocent. Cold or hot baths taken in excess, with far too much soap, have washed away all the rugged bloom from their bodies. The last vestige of their limited stamina has thus been sapped and diluted. Bad and injudicious feeding has made dyspeptics of them all. Hunting, golf, cricket

and football, besides having undermined their health and strained their hearts, has sublimated fifty per cent of their inadequate store of animality, while smoking and drinking has extinguished the last flicker of their wanton spirits. (‘The fad of feminism’, pp. 230–1)

It is not generally known that sport and a good many out-of-door games and exercises, like the English working week, are really an importation from France, and that in the sixteenth century English travellers on the Continent used to comment with surprise on the number of French people they saw with either a ball or racquet in their hand. In those days, the English people were not nearly so much addicted to these pastimes as their neighbours across the Channel, and as late as the seventeenth century the English standing on the banks of the Thames looked on with horrified astonishment while the Duchess of Chevreuse, a lady in Queen Mary’s suite, swam across the river and back again. Bathing would appear to have been an innovation regarded with very strong disapproval by the English at that time. Even the English game of football, which is probably the oldest of the games played in these islands, was hardly ever indulged in by the people before the eighteenth century because it was repeatedly prohibited by law. Royal edicts for its suppression were issued successively by Edward III, Henry IV and Henry VIII, and it was forbidden under Queen Elizabeth on pain of imprisonment. In Scotland an act was passed in 1457 to discontinue both football and golf, as they threatened to supersede archery, and there is no doubt that the English prohibitions were dictated by the same fear.

Thus, for many years England was spared one of the most dangerous games, in so far as the wrong use of self is intensified by violent movement, and that is probably why her people maintained a very good physique for very much longer than would have been possible had football been played throughout the Middle Ages and subsequently as extensively as it is played now.

The extreme popularity of sport and out-of-door games in England at the present day is no doubt due, in the first place, to the dullness, sedentariness and lack of air which characterize the work of the greater part of the population, and, secondly, to the increasing belief that something must be done to correct the prevailing debility and improve the health of the nation. But the extreme indulgence in sport and violent out-of-door games is not on that account a good sign, and the benefits supposed to be derived from it are

much more probably due to the open air than to the sports and games themselves. In any case, these benefits are more than balanced by the harm that results, particularly in violent games—like football for men, and hockey, lacrosse and netball for women—from the players' wrong use of themselves during the most active moments throughout the duration of the play, and what is true of sports and games is also true of gymnastics and exercises of all kinds. Even lawn tennis is very bad from this point of view and, unless by a fluke or else by knowledge, the tennis-player uses himself properly during the game, there can be no doubt that his pastime is a frequent source of heart and other troubles which are commonly ascribed by medical men to 'the speeding-up of city life', to 'overwork' or else to 'nervous strain'.

Hitherto, the wrong use of self, together with faulty coordination in sport and games, has affected chiefly men, because it is only recently that girls and women have been encouraged to engage in out-of-door exercise, and this is probably one of the reasons why degeneracy has become very much more noticeable among men than among women. It is proverbial that athletes and champions in violent games today are usually very nervous and strained men for their age. Heart disease is common amongst them, and the increase of heart trouble in recent years is no doubt due partly to the fact that sport, games and exercises, particularly drilling in school, as a compensation for an unhealthy life, are being indulged in more and more.

With the prevalent wrong use of self, accompanied by faulty coordination, however, games and exercises are no correction either of the consequences of an unhealthy life or of an unhealthy condition of the body. Apart from the good derived from being in the open air, they do but aggravate these conditions, and that explains the strange anomaly that although English people are probably at the present time, and have been for many years, the most enthusiastic lovers of all open-air games and sports, their health record, as the [First World] War showed, was worse than that of any of the Allied nations. Had it been only just as bad as that of other nations, the fact would still have appeared surprising, because games and sport are supposed to be 'so good for you', and it is curious that the above argument, based upon Mr Alexander's masterly diagnosis, is probably the first attempt at accounting on physiological grounds for the apparent anomaly.

It would, of course, be very much better for us if our civilization were such that no correction of unhealthy conditions were needed, and if the daily life of the people and their breadwinning occupations secured them the necessary amount of health and fresh air. And that is why the Egyptians wisely forbade every form of gymnastics, because they believed that where supplementary exercises were necessary the ordinary life of the people must be wrong and, therefore, that the proper step to take was to correct their life. But seeing that our civilization does impose an unhealthy existence upon the bulk of the people, and that there is little hope of its being corrected, it is a thousand pities that the correctives employed, in the form of games, sports and exercises, should in themselves be a means of aggravating the vices they are meant to correct and should even create new troubles which may be regarded as essentially modern and the outcome of violent out-of-door exercise.

But there is another effect of sport and games upon the manhood of the nation. I can never forget M. Briand's remark to Mr Lloyd George when the latter tried to interest him in golf. 'Mais c'est un jeu d'écolier!',[28] exclaimed the French statesman, and indeed he described it precisely. This concentration by adult Englishmen, for the alleged purposes of health, upon games of skill which consist chiefly in hitting, throwing or kicking a ball in various directions are so ingeniously calculated to keep intellectual cooperation in the background that, particularly in the governing classes, it has done an enormous amount of harm. It is a curious coincidence, if it is a coincidence, that the most genial and gifted statesman of modern times, Joseph Chamberlain—whose idea of the Federation of Empire, although it was never carried out, was probably the most constructive political proposal of this century—never played an out-of-door game of skill. And it also strange that our greatest modern writer and dramatist, Bernard Shaw, is a man who also eschews every kind of sport. I do not mean by this that all games and all sports are therefore to be eschewed. All I mean is that too narrow a concentration upon them is certainly deleterious to thought and intellect, while their intensive pursuit by the majority of modern men, most of whom use themselves wrongly, makes games and sport an additional cause of degeneration instead of a source of recuperation and vigour. (*Man: An Indictment*, pp. 324–8)

Sixty years ago, Darwin pointed out the extremely significant fact that in sailors the 'circumference of the hips is less than in soldiers'. As it would

be fantastic to suppose that only men with unusually narrow hips join the Navy, it seems more than likely that the strenuous muscular strains put on the pelvic area in youths who go to sea and have constantly to climb ropes, masts, etc. causes an earlier ossification and arrest of growth in the pelvis.

Seeing that a premature rigidity of the bony brim would hardly be necessary except to bear the strain of harder muscles and ligaments, the latter, too, are probably stiffened. And if this happens with the male, similar strenuous exercise probably affects the female in the same way.

Dr Stephen Westmann, apparently unaware of Darwin's finding, speaks of the muscles of the rump and thighs as acting 'constrictively and formatively like a corset on the developing pelvis, if they have been excessively strengthened and hardened by physical exercise'. And he adds: 'This perhaps explains why the pelvimetric records of an investigator like Bach revealed a preponderance of narrow pelves among female gymnasts and sportswomen who had engaged in prize-contests'.

Drs E. Düntzer and M. Hellendall found comparatively small pelves in the majority of the 1,500 female participants in a gymnastic contest, and Dr Meyrick Booth concludes that in the athletic woman a general stiffening and constriction of the pelvic area probably occurs, and quotes maternal mortality rates in Anglo-Saxon countries to substantiate this.

True, … women with tastes preponderatingly masculine, and with, therefore, pronounced masculine traits, tend to enter sport and compete with distinction in games and athletic contests. Probably all female athletes consequently have an initial masculine bias with such physical correlatives as narrow android or funnel-type pelves. Particularly in the young girl, however, the adaptation factor is extremely important, as promoting a premature ossification of the pelvic bones to meet the unusual strains imposed on them.

Moreover, if we accept Dr Oskar Riddle's findings regarding the modification of the metabolic rate in females by extensive participation in games, sports, etc., we are compelled to conclude that, apart from the changes wrought in the pelvis and its muscles by mechanical means, a constitutional change occurs in the young female engaged in intensive muscular exertion, which in itself inclines her to masculinity.

Dr Riddle's contention is both clear and significant. Fundamentally, he says, the difference between the sexes is one of metabolic rate, the male

having the higher and the female the lower. And he shows that in his experiments sex changes followed an alteration of the rate. ‘The basic relation borne by sex to metabolism’, he writes, ‘places those endocrine organs which are primarily concerned in regulating metabolism, notably the thyroid-supra-renal medulla, on a new and close relationship with sexuality’.

The import of his data is momentous, for it amounts to no less than this: if sex can be reversed under prolonged metabolic changes, is it likely that the profound and often continuous fluctuations in metabolism induced by altered habits have no effect on those sex characters which develop only at and after adolescence? He then asks this most important question: ‘Is the increased metabolism of the female professional athlete favourable to her sex development and reproductive functions?’

Thus, by encouraging our girls to engage in strenuous sports and athletics, not occasionally but as a habit, may we not be confirming a masculine bias of constitution already present or modifying pure gynaecoid types in a masculine direction both by the mechanical and metabolic influence? This most serious question should be carefully considered by all educators of female children and adolescents. (*The Truth about Childbirth,* pp. 164–6)

Abortion

Turning now to an all-too-brief enumeration of the reasons why I oppose the legalization of abortion, I say it should be resisted:

> (1) Because it is a measure appealing to and calculated to accommodate only the masculinoid female, and when any other more desirable woman urges it she does so in ignorance of what it means and what it involves. Why is the masculinoid woman prone to avail herself of legalized abortion and to support the movement favouring it? Because her masculinoid morphology and psyche indicate that she is the victim either of gonadal insufficiency, which makes her female impulses feeble; of genital hypoplasia (under-development of her generative equipment), which makes her indifferent to the psychophysical experiences of maternity; or of a definite male bias in her physiology (a metabolic rate or endocrine balance, or both, approaching the male type), which makes her wish to escape her essentially female destiny.

(2) Because only puritans and killjoys can wish to exploit the panic that has seized upon the womanhood of Western civilization in order, by starting a new fashion or tradition, to deprive the only desirable examples of that womanhood of their full sex-expression and experience, to limit it to a paltry few years in the long span of sexual life Nature has given them, and possibly to deprive them of the very capacity to enjoy that sexual life and to feel its thrills and desires. This panic has arisen through the mismanagement of gestation and parturition by our civilization and its science, and through the recruitment to motherhood every year of thousands of degenerate women who have no business to become parous and who therefore give female sex-functions a bad name. As, however, this is only a bad phase, which wise measures can and will overcome, it would be insane to alter our institutions and laws just to meet the requirements of this bad phase, and thus perpetrate a degenerate patch in our history.

(3) Because it cannot and will not suppress criminal or surreptitious abortion, but by causing artificial abortion to seem more rational and proper (owing to its new odour of official sanctity) make it much more difficult, as they are discovering in Russia, to instruct the population as a whole concerning its grave disadvantages and dangers.

(4) Because the only way to deal with surreptitious and criminal abortion and to put a stop to the agitation for legalized abortion is to attempt what has never yet been attempted in England or France, but which they are now (only too belatedly) trying in Russia: to educate the female population in the elements of the whole problem, so that they may know the gravity and dangers of interrupting a pregnancy. At present, the very agitation in favour of legalized abortion leads thousands of ill-informed women (chiefly married, although much is made by my opponents out of the tragically pathetic plight of the unmarried mother) to think that the operation is as simple and safe as a haircut. And many of the less scrupulous advocates of legalized abortion must be held responsible for this widespread belief.

Even in the most wildly revolutionary state, however, certain operations for abortion at certain times cannot be legalized. There will always, therefore, be a surreptitious service to meet desperate cases who prefer death to the alternative. But even in these cases much good could be done by spreading knowledge of the gravity and danger of

interrupting a pregnancy. Legalizing abortion … could not touch such cases.

(5) Because *ton corps n'est pas à toi*[29] and never can be *à toi* … Your body cannot be your own to do as you like with so long as you live with other people in a state of more or less mutual dependence, in which there is a tacit agreement (now ratified by law) that you will support them, and they you, in case of mishap. In such circumstances, when you yourself and everyone else insists in adversity on getting the last ounce of your neighbour's pity, there cannot possibly be a right deliberately to make yourself a permanent burden on the community by gratuitously interfering with a natural process.

(6) Because, as usual in these agitations, only a misguided authority is demanding this reform. The wiser, sounder and more normal among the women of the nation are not interested in it.

There is no doubt that, were the measure passed, thousands would avail themselves of the right, as they have done in Russia (very largely for frivolous or so-called 'social' reasons). But although, apart from the burden they would impose, one would not mind the degenerate elements in their thousands invaliding themselves, the danger is that thousands of perfectly sound and desirable women would, thanks to the new fashion, the new facilities and the false doctrine associated with both, join their less desirable sisters in the stampede to the abortion clinics, and it this contingent of ill-informed, desirable mothers that must be saved.

(7) Because, as Dr Hamel declares, 'if abortion were made legitimate, there would be danger that the number of marriages would decrease, as, in many instances, the unmarried father would urge the unmarried mother to consent to abortion'. Cases of this kind are coming to light frequently enough to enable us to infer that the practice would become much more common if it were legalized. It is true that, on the present Russian system of refusing to perform abortions on first pregnancies, the legalization of abortion in this country, if based on the Russian plan, would not include these cases. But there is evidence that some at least of the advocates of legalized abortion would like to include them. On the other hand, we know that, over large tracts of England and Wales—i.e., in Norfolk, certain parts of London, and the

West Country—and the Continent, marriage now often takes place only after pregnancy is established.

(8) Finally, because it will grossly increase the permanent invalidism of the nation, already overburdened with invalidism. At the present moment, for every 300,000 women confined in Great Britain annually, 68,000 suffer either immediate death (3,000) or death from the late results of childbearing (5,000) or crippledom, or more or less serious injury, or ill-health or disablement as the result of it (60,000). These figures do not, of course, give us any idea of casualties or invalidism from other causes, although these are very high. They cover only the casualties from ordinary childbirth (some of which, I do not deny, may now be due to criminal abortion). But, at all events, is this a time—if it is possible to speak of an appropriate time for such a purpose—to multiply and promote invalidism by such wholesale abortions as would be likely to follow (according to Russian experiences) from legalized abortion? It is obviously not the time to speak lightly or irresponsibly of any public service that is likely to increase the already heavy toll of morbidity in the nation. (*Abortion*, pp. 101–6)

While, however, condemning the proposal to legalize abortion, attention might usefully be called to many reforms which might alleviate the lot of those women who are confronted with the prospect of bearing so-called ‘unwanted’ children. For instance:

(a) We should alter our attitude to the question of the right age of marriage for girls, and in this sympathetically consider existing French laws and customs.

(b) We should considerably soften our attitude to the unmarried mother, while not relaxing our severity towards the man in the case, if he either declines to marry her or is revealed as unable to do so.

(c) We should ponder the desirability of subsidizing or endowing indigent motherhood, but only in those cases which give reasonable hope (through the constitution of the parents or of children already borne) that the offspring will be an asset to the nation. A large proportion of the treasure now squandered by the degeneracy-humanitarians on human rubbish might immediately be diverted to this object with advantage, and would lead to a rapid improvement in the nation’s stock.

(d) We should leave no stone unturned to reduce the morbidity of childbearing and its present torture-chamber features. Although the latter are grossly exaggerated by rumour, and childbearing is much more often normal and pleasant than is generally supposed, it is important to make it more generally normal. The solution cannot be more anaesthetics. The solution is the normalizing of a natural function that has been allowed to become, in far too many cases, abnormal, and the plain broadcasting of the facts about the congenitally abnormal recruits to motherhood who give a normal function a bad name among the sound. (You might as well give running a bad name because it is bad for people with angina pectoris!) These two measures would do all that is needed to arrest the modern 'flight from maternity', which is implicit in the movement for birth control and artificial abortion. But nothing can be achieved by argument and moral suasion. Only the suppression of the acute masculine accent over life, and the restored experience of pleasantness in childbearing and childrearing, can reinstate among the higher races that dignity and joy of the full female sex-cycle which appear to have gone from the sexual life of too many civilized women. But, to this end, other workers besides myself will have to appreciate that we really do lie under a cloud of false doctrines today, and that to those who can clearly see that cloud many of the sex problems of the age acquire a wholly new, eloquent and frequently disquieting significance. (*Abortion*, pp. 106–8)

Old Age

Owing to delicate scruples based on courtesy and consideration of politeness, much too little has been said and written hitherto about the influence of the old upon conventions and legislation. And yet the whole of a very large volume might be filled with this subject alone, and the historical and anthropological instances that might be adduced to illustrate it. The truth is, the subject is unpleasant and unflattering to the old. And, as the old are powerful, it has not yet been ventilated.

The old people of every generation, however, like the rest of mankind, will always be found to exercise their power in gratifying their strongest impulses, whether conscious or unconscious. And since, vis-à-vis of youth and wanton spirits, particularly of joyful sexuality, the old are secretly—and, frequently, quite unbeknown to their conscious minds—extremely jealous, it would amount to a piece of psychological shallowness to suppose

that this jealousy does not motivate them in exercising whatever power they possess. Particularly is this true of old men. And in estimating the causes of the continuation of puritanism, despite the decline in the power of Christian dogma and metaphysics, we must reckon, especially in the case of Mrs Grundy legislation, with the rancorous jealousy of old men and men beyond middle-age …

This hostility and jealousy which the old feel towards the young may not be obvious to all, but there are many signs, quite apart from puritanical legislative measures, which, if they were generally observed, would convince the most stubborn disbelievers of its existence.

Take, for instance, the attitude of old people during the [First World] War. Is it too much to say that they enjoyed it? I myself saw a septuagenarian go livid with rage when it was suggested to him, after the Somme battles, that the war should in some way be stopped. Let those who imagine that a septuagenarian goes livid with rage out of offended patriotism continue to cherish their pretty illusions!

Turn now to the columns of *The Times* and read the letters that poured in from sexagenarians, septuagenarians and octogenarians imploring the authorities to continue the war at all costs, when there was some talk of peace at the end of 1916. These people were exhilarated and uplifted by the war, chiefly because, for a brief space, their secret and mortal jealousy of youth was receiving its most gratifying relief. At last the order of decease was for a while reversed. They who had hitherto been in the front rank, on the edge of the grave, were watching their juniors being brought from the rear and tumbled into the darkness, long before the appointed time. It is a mistake to suppose that bitter spinsters were the only people who read the Roll of Honour at their breakfast-tables with feelings of secret triumph.

All this probably sounds very hard and unkind, particularly to people who are wont to sentimentalize over grey locks and wrinkled faces, but sentimentality is hardly ever a suitable pathway to truth. (*Man: An Indictment,* pp. 299–302)

The Medical Profession

‘I am literally ashamed of my profession’, he said … ‘Not because it is generally dishonest, not because it perpetrates the most astounding blunders, and not because it makes hosts of people die too late. But because it is a profession built upon the sick and the unsound. The power that

doctors now have in their hands almost surpasses the power of the priesthood in the Middle Ages. But just as the priesthood then built their empire upon the slaves and the poor, and opposed the kings with the people at their backs, so in our days the medical profession has built its empire upon the sick, the maimed and the polluted, and, with all the ruck and scum of pathological humanity to support it, is opposing the sound and the hale with all its might …

'We are, in fact, exactly like the ancient priesthood', he continued. 'We have our lay members, the hospital nurses, unto whom our cause and our word are holy. We draw the sums we choose from the rich and we pose as defenders of the poor in our spare time. We have our ritual and we have our freemasonry. We have our secrets and we have our crimes. Wealthy people when they die leave huge sums to our monasteries, the hospitals of the world, and we stand at the death-beds of monarchs, princes, noblemen and agnostics, just as the priests of yore used to stand at the death-bed of their rulers and their parishioners. We have, indeed, invented a new kind of death which is no longer religious, but scientific'. (*Catherine Doyle,* pp. 263–5)

We can … expect that science, instead of concentrating, as now, upon providing us with ever more efficient extracorporeal equipment such as wireless telegraphy, aeroplanes, etc., and more and more substitutes and aids for our defective bodies, will turn its research in the direction of restoring to man bodily perfection and to extending the range of his faculties. It will probe the mystery of powers like clairvoyance and direct healing (such as that effected by the laying on of hands from time immemorial); it will discover the mechanism (if any) behind telepathy and behind the peculiar magnetism of cultivated will power, and discover an educational technique by which these properties and powers may become more general, more efficient and more far-reaching. It will seek the method behind the laws of heredity and establish principles whereby family and stock qualities may be brought to perfection. It will also sift the mass of evidence and facts collected by modern science, in order to coordinate the data and establish lines of proper conduct and legitimate aspiration. Finally, it will aim at coordinating religious and naturalistic truths up to date, with the view of offering to mankind a new faith and a new metaphysic, purged of the sick and degenerate elements of former religions. (*Lysistrata,* pp. 109–10)

The Alexander Technique

Certain minor troubles, due chiefly to inadequate oxygenation of the blood, thus steadily improved. I distinctly grew. My clothes of a year previously were the garments of a different man. No amount of tailor's tinkering could any longer adapt them to my frame, and with it all I began to feel a new *joie de vivre,* a new zest both at work and at play.

Sleep, digestion and general functioning began to grow more normal, more reminiscent of my childhood and adolescence …

Quite apart from the surprising and welcome benefits to health derived from the change, however, there is the new joy, and a great joy it is, of governing and directing one's use of self, of watching one's body, like the perfect machine it is, responding accurately to the correct controls, the skilled management, and of looking on while orders which previously one would have declared fantastic and futile are smoothly and punctually carried out by an organism that has at last acquired a master who knows.

And how has all this come about?

Not by tedious exercises! Not by any hitherto hackneyed and disappointing physical regimen. But by learning the proper use of the central control of my postural reflexes in every one of my activities; by learning to inhibit the viciously conditioned and faulty reflexes of old, and by acquiring a vigilance and alertness beside which the vigilance and alertness of a motorist or an airman is elementary and puerile. (*Health and Education through Self-Mastery,* pp. 113–15)

If … I were asked to summarize the effect of a course of training in the correct use of self on the mental processes, I should be inclined to say that it consists of increasing a man's sympathies by breaking down the barriers set up by subjective preoccupations. In this sense it produces a more realistic, more objective attitude to environment. A man whose consciousness has been extended is less prone than the average man to delusive obsessions about the world and his neighbours, he is more awake in his wakeful hours, and more inclined to complete inactivity of mind while asleep. He is more balanced because less harassed, more equable because less worked upon by inner perturbations, and perhaps more charitable because less egocentric. The modern world has yet to learn that it is the invalid, in every sense of that word, who, being perpetually reminded of self and of his functions (owing precisely to the latter's imperfections), is most likely to be unenlightened in his egoism, self-centred and unable to look out peacefully

and receptively about him. Like the infant, the invalid is compelled constantly to feel, if not to say, ‘all for myself’, and for the simple reason that subjective preoccupations perpetually demand his attention.

It is not difficult to see, therefore, that, quite apart from the extension of consciousness, the release from the subjective preoccupations of dysfunction alone must exert a very appreciable influence on the mental processes; and were it not for the extreme rarity of perfect functioning in modern mankind, particularly among intellectuals, the distinction between the outlook of the perfectly and the imperfectly functioning type would long ago have been exemplified and recorded in two wholly different philosophies, generally recognized and valued in accordance with the nature of their human source.

But there is another and totally different aspect of the influence of correct use of self on the mind, and that is the change that occurs in the mental reactions of the man who has achieved mastery of himself. In such a man, owing to his long familiarity with the difficult practice of inhibiting primitive impulses, there is developed a power of deliberation and resistance to outside and inside influences which tends to make his mental reactions less precipitate, less headlong and less ill-considered. Judgements and actions become less impulsive. He becomes less easily swayed, less susceptible to hetero-suggestion, firmer in any position once assumed, but less stubborn than the wholly subjective person because he has a check even upon auto-suggestion. He develops, in fact, what is known as character, which is resistance, and in his mental attitude acquires that strength which is the counterpart to the immunity from disease imparted to him by his improved functioning.

Let no-one imagine, however, that the path of the student of the correct use of the self is strewn with roses. Let no-one suppose that he can take it up as a pleasant pastime, like golf, bridge or chess. It is in many respects the most exacting and at the same time the most humiliating experience a man can undergo. For, while it holds out vistas of the heights to which a man can attain if only he applies himself and concentrates, it also exposes him to himself as a creature so automatically directed hitherto, so essentially the thrall of his unconscious processes, that it constitutes the severest rebuke that could possibly be administered to his pride. Through it he sees revealed the extremely thin partition that once separated him from the borderline mental case, and as he begins to master it he wonders

whether there was anything more than speech alone that formerly distinguished him from the highest anthropoids or even the beasts of the field. (*Health and Education through Self-Mastery,* pp. 122–5)

Humour

[O]ne of the main difficulties in investigating the meaning of laughter consists in the great variety of circumstances in which a laugh seems a suitable expression. For instance:

(a) A small child, hard-pressed by a pursuer, laughs when it reaches safety in the folds of its mother's dress. There is nothing obviously funny or humorous, however, in running to safety.

(b) A young woman, knowing herself to be well-dressed, smiles constantly and laughs at the slightest provocation. There is nothing obviously funny or humorous about being well-dressed. On the contrary, it is often more funny and humorous not to be well-dressed.

(c) We are told that the gods on Olympus burst into loud laughter when they saw Hephaestus hobbling lamely from one to another offering them nectar. Hephaestus was the crippled ugly god.

(d) We are told that David Garrick once broke down in a tragic scene because he was laughing so much at a man in the front who, owing to the heat, had placed his wig on his dog's head.

(e) Children and some adults laugh to see harlequin belabouring the clown.

(f) Some people laugh to hear other people speaking a foreign language, or speaking their own language in an odd way. Much of the success of Harry Lauder in London was due to this human peculiarity.

(g) Many people have difficulty in not laughing at someone who loses his hat in the wind and proceeds to grope about for it, at great personal risk, under the bonnets of cars and the heads of horses.

(h) On the other hand, that same person will laugh when he is trying to recover his hat, and will look anxiously and laugh at those near him when he first loses it.

(i) Once on a damp, greasy day in Old Bond Street, where the pavement has two different levels, a smartly-dressed woman, evidently unfamiliar with the two levels, fell in front of me. Her handbag dropped on the flags and sprang open, money rolled in all directions, and I noticed that her white gloves, her silk stockings and the skirt of her dress were badly soiled. And yet, the whole time that I and a few

others assisted her to her feet and helped her to recover her property, she never once stopped laughing. Now, it cannot be funny or humorous to fall and soil one's clothes in the street.

(j) We laugh when we inhale nitrous oxide.

(k) We also laugh at a mere absurdity, as, for instance, when we are told that two lions kept in adjoining cages broke through the partition separating them, and in their fury mauled each other until only the tips of their tails were left.

(l) Again, the more dignified the person is who has a fall, the more we laugh. A ragged, bedraggled tramp falling in the dust or mud is not nearly so funny as one of His Majesty's judges or a bishop performing the same antic …

(m) We never laugh at a horse, a child or an old woman who falls.

(n) We laugh when we are embarrassed. In fact, the typical mannerism of all timid and ill-adapted young people on the stage is a perpetual simper or laugh.

(o) We laugh at any mishap that may occur to a performer on the stage. Voltaire actually said: 'I have noticed that a whole theatre audience never laughs loudly as one man except when a mishap occurs to one of the performers'.

Once—I believe it was at the Coliseum—I saw Sir Frank Benson walk on to recite a speech from one of Shakespeare's historical plays. He was in the garb of some ancient knight or noble, and as he approached the footlights he tripped over his long sword. The whole audience rocked with laughter and, although he bravely shouted the speech he had to deliver, nothing would compose the house to seriousness, and at last he had to retire discomfited.

(p) We laugh at schoolboy howlers. But—and this is most important—we only laugh if the howler is one which our own unaided knowledge enables us to recognize as such. When we hear a schoolboy refer to the bridge spanning the Menai Straits as a 'tubercular bridge', we may laugh. We may also laugh when he hear him describe an oculist as 'a fish with long legs'. When, however, the howler concerns some science or language with which we are not familiar, we cannot laugh, except out of courtesy to the interpreter, even when the howler is carefully explained to us. Why is a mistake we know of our own

knowledge to be a mistake funny, and a mistake we know through someone else's knowledge to be a mistake not funny?

(q) We laugh at a pun.

(r) We laugh more heartily and loudly at a joke or a pun in a foreign language which we happen to understand than at a joke of equal merit in our own language. De Quincey thought that many scholars had, as the result of a like infirmity, grossly exaggerated the value of certain classical writers.

(s) We laugh when tickled.

(t) We smile or laugh when we meet a friend. But even when an enemy passes and we are in company, we also take care to smile or laugh, to indicate to the enemy that we are no worse off for his absence from our circle.

(u) Although a joke may be really funny, we rarely if ever think it so if it is against ourselves.

An instance of this occurred at the Law Courts a few years ago, in the case of Captain Wright versus Lord Gladstone. Mr Norman Birkett, counsel for Lord Gladstone, cross-examining Captain Wright, said: 'Did you see the daily papers on July 28th?' Captain Wright said: 'No'. Mr Birkett suggested that the reading-room of the club would contain all the London daily newspapers; he could have seen them there. Captain Wright retorted: 'I am a journalist, not a barrister. I don't rush to the papers to see if my name is in them'. There was some laughter and Mr Justice Avory remarked: 'There is nothing funny in that'. Evidently some people present did think it funny. Mr Justice Avory could not, however, because, being a member of the legal profession and having been a barrister, he could not enjoy a joke which exalted journalists at the expense of the dignity of his own calling.

(v) When we slip in trying to reach a platform, or knock our heads by accident in front of a crowd, we provoke loud laughter, but it offends us to be laughed at. Even animals, according to some people, are annoyed at being laughed at.

(w) We laugh at a surprise or an expectation that ends in nothing. Many investigators have believed this kind of laugh to be the only kind.

(x) We laugh at an incongruity (Schopenhauer's example under [k]).

(y) We laugh at a good nonsense picture by Lear or Bateman.

(z) We laugh at mere caricature.

(A) We laugh at disguises.

(B) We laugh when others laugh.

(C) We laugh at a good ruse, a good trick, a good case of diamond cut diamond, and at a witticism.

(D) We laugh at good mimicry or imitation.

(E) We laugh in what we conceive to be an intellectual way when, in a public debate, one disputant cracks a joke against his opponent, and we then regard the disputant who has had the joke cracked against him as defeated in the argument.

(F) We laugh at mere indecencies, or at scenes, reference and stories actually indecent, bordering on the indecent, on the stage, in books and in daily life. Men, after dinner, when the ladies have retired, habitually laugh at indecent and salacious stories.

I have now given thirty-two examples of laughter in which the expression is associated with different circumstances. There seems, at first glance, to be very little connection between these various laughs—between, for instance, the laugh of embarrassment, the exaggerated laugh at the joke in a foreign language and the laugh provoked by nitrous oxide—but seeing that all the examples I have given provoke the same expression, laughter, it would seem that some common factor must connect them, and that if we find this common factor we shall know the nature of laughter and what causes it …

What has been done by thinkers and philosophers in the past about the matter? (*The Secret of Laughter*, pp. 19–25)

… Hobbes … says:

> ‘Sudden glory’ is the passion which maketh those ‘grimaces’ called ‘laughter’; and is caused either by some sudden act of their own that pleaseth them or by the apprehension of some deformed thing in another by comparison whereof they suddenly applaud themselves. And it is incident most to them that are conscious of the fewest abilities in themselves; who are forced to keep themselves in their own favour by observing the imperfections of other men. And therefore much laughter at the defects of others is a sign of pusillanimity. For of great minds one of the proper works is to help and free others from scorn, and compare themselves only with the unstable.

Now, here, although I do not claim that we have a perfect verbal statement of the exhaustive definition of laughter, I do maintain, in opposition to most Anglo-Saxon critics and thinkers, that we have an exhaustive definition because—and these are facts overlooked by all Anglo-Saxon critics of the great philosopher—in Hobbes's explanation not only is the old field of the ancients retained but it is greatly extended to include … the series of laughs which are subjective, all the laughs which are objective and, in addition, a satisfactory reason why laughter can offend, and why some people laugh excessively.

It is characteristic of the Anglo-Saxon critics of Hobbes that they consistently shirk the explanation of two aspects of laughter: its subjective aspect and its sting. They withdraw the sting on the one hand by saying that men do not laugh from any feeling of superiority, and then, when they are obliged to admit that laughter can and does offend when it is directed against one, they are naturally at a loss to account for the offence. Some of them, including the Frenchman Bergson, … actually take the sting for granted without attempting to explain it.

Laughter is self-glory. So we can now understand why a person can laugh apparently at nothing—that is to say, unprovoked by any external stimulus or the memory of any external stimulus … We can now also understand all those laughs in which there is definite outside provocation, for, although Hobbes quite unnecessarily limits the series of these external stimuli, those externally provoked laughs not mentioned by him are, as I hope to show, implicit in his two words, 'self-glory'.

If, therefore, Hobbes's definition of laughter has hitherto been found one-sided and inadequate, I suggest that it is owing to the fact that most critics and writers have themselves deliberately limited it. Instantly angered by the uncharitable and 'selfish' appearance of the words 'self-glory', they gave the definition no further thought and condemned it.

And yet, with Hobbes's definition of laughter before us, we can understand so much that was obscure before. We can now see why the schoolboy, standing stripped in the sunlight on a sandy shore, laughs and laughs heartily—at nothing! We can see why a young girl, knowing herself to be faultlessly attired, will laugh at the most inadequate provocation. Why the same young girl will laugh with sincere and convincing heartiness at the clumsiest remark made by the handsome young man who admires her, and

will hardly notice the profound witticism of the plain man who has apparently not noticed her … There is not, in fact, an example I have given which cannot be explained by Hobbes's definition.

But this is not all, for Hobbes's explanation also clears up the mystery about the offensive character of laughter when it is directed against one—a mystery carefully ignored not only by Bergson but also by all those who oppose Hobbes—and it gives us a most important and valuable hint concerning the kind of people who laugh most. This last contribution to the subject alone sets Hobbes head and shoulders above most moderns in the matter of psychological insight. (*The Secret of Laughter,* pp. 49–51)

Can it be possible … that in the facial contortions themselves there is some signal, some instinctively recognizable message, the precise burden of which has been forgotten by man, but which he unconsciously, and animals instinctively, read as a sign of superior adaptation and therefore a menace to their own adaptation?

… I said that, since laughter is provoked by a diversity of causes, among which I mentioned some purely subjective states, there must be something that is common to every laugh and every cause of laughter—that is to say, we must be able to show an intimate connection between the laugh of the embarrassed lady in Bond Street (example [i] …) and that of the child seeking safety in the folds of its mother's skirt (example [a]), as well as the laugh of the same child when it sees the clown belaboured by harlequin (example [e]), and that of the man who inhales nitrous oxide (example [f]).

As, however, there often appears to be nothing in common between the circumstances occasioning these four kinds of laughter (not to mention the rest of my thirty-two examples) it seems as if we must change our ground and turn from the circumstances to the expression itself.

Now, Darwin observed that in laughter 'the upper teeth are commonly exposed'—that is to say, that in laughing we show teeth. But while we may be the only animals that laugh, we are by no means the only animals that have occasion to show teeth. And if we are convinced evolutionists, and believe that, just as sounds and expressions of anger, distress, alarm, kindly interest and friendliness are more or less alike all through the order of mammals—if they were not, animals of different species would never understand one another or man as promptly as they do—there must be some origin and parallel in the animal kingdom to our own laughter, and more

particularly to the facial expression of showing teeth. Nor need we be baffled by the fact that showing teeth among animals may appear at first sight to mean something very different from what it is with us, seeing that we have long ceased to use our teeth as they use them, whether in killing prey, battle or merely danger-signalling. Now, animals show teeth—that is to say, they make a deliberate display of teeth—only when they wish to warn a fellow, a foe or man of the danger of pursuing certain tactics too far. The display of teeth, or fangs, by the cat when hissing, by the dog when growling, by the serpent when attacked or approached, and by an angry horse, if translated into words would approach this: ‘Here are my weapons; if you come any nearer, if you pursue these hostile tactics, or carry even the present ragging too far, I shall use them on you!’

The teeth gleam. They are visible to the attacking or merely threatening foe. They are the animals’ arsenal of weapons, its equipment for war, for survival in the struggle for existence. But weapons and equipment for war and for survival are, in the jungle at least, the chief concrete factor in the claim of superior adaptation. To display teeth, therefore, is to make a claim of superior adaptation. It may be only bluff, as when the terrified kitten displays her teeth to a collie dog or an airedale, but at least the desperate claim she makes to a superior adaptation frequently enables her to accomplish her object, which is to warn off the enemy without the danger of an actual trial of strength. True, she arches her back as well and her hair stands on end, but her climax of ‘frightfulness’ is reached at the moment when she exposes her fangs, and when this manoeuvre succeeds, as it frequently does and as it must have done millions of times in her line of ancestry in her past, we can imagine her intense satisfaction and her consequent attachment to the expression which leads to such hair’s-breadth escapes.

Now, if we have really descended from the animals, is it not difficult to suppose that this habit of millions of years, so useful, so deeply ingrained, so intimately associated with success and survival, should have passed entirely out of our gamut of expressions, should have been utterly lost, seeing that it reaches back as far as the reptilian period, before any mammal existed? Is it not much more likely that, with the increasing use of external weapons, accessory arms—spears, arrows, bludgeons, tomahawks, etc.—the showing of teeth (like the use of them in fighting), while retaining its instinctive association, the expression of superior adaptation, should have

become volatilized, spiritualized and been transferred to all those manifold and complex situations in society in which gregarious animals either find or feel themselves superiorly adapted, or merely lay a false claim to such a position by means of bluff? And is it not exceedingly probable, if the expression was retained as a mere claim to superior adaptation in general, that its original relation to mere warfare, or the threat of warfare, should now be completely forgotten?

In short, is it not likely that, with the vast majority of men, even the precise though general notion of superior adaptation must now have become unconscious, only to have left consciously associated with the expression a feeling of pleasure, of triumph or success, either genuine or feigned?

This certainly explains the immediate and instinctive recognition of laughter as an expression that may intimidate and humiliate; it is the only explanation of laughter that can possibly account for the animal's dislike of it, for obviously to the animal a show of teeth has not ceased to mean a show of weapons, and if we accept this theory we have accounted for a very important quality of laughter …

At all events, if now, instead of the term 'laugh' we proceed to use, in regard to all the examples of laughter I have given, the term 'show teeth' (meaning a display signalling superior adaptation), we shall find not only that it explains everything but also that the number of further examples which it fits may be extended indefinitely.

Even the sounds accompanying laughter, that cachinnation which is always distinctly guttural—Darwin noticed that it came 'from deep down in the throat'—may be merely a specific variation of the hiss of the cat and of its remote ancestor the reptile, while anyone whose attention has been called to monkeys fiercely fighting, by the cackling sound they make, must have seen, on beholding their exposed teeth, the connection between their expression and human laughter, although the circumstances of each seem on the surface so different. (*The Secret of Laughter,* pp. 69–73)

I now propose to test the definition by means of the examples given … though before I start it may be well to emphasize the fact that, whereas all laughter is the expression of superior adaptation, all states of superior adaptation do not necessarily lead to laughter, and also that, whereas the explanation I have given of the facial expression in laughter seems to

account for the origin of laughter, the definition of laughter would still stand, even if the explanation of the expression could not be sustained.

The letters in brackets correspond to those prefixed to each example … so that there will be no need to repeat the examples *in extenso*.

(a) To find safety at its mother's side after being chased is to find superior adaptation. Therefore the signal of superior adaptation, showing teeth, is instinctively made.

(b) To know oneself well-dressed is to be conscious of superior adaptation. Self-glory, not necessarily resulting from any comparison, is therefore felt and the slightest provocation broadens the perpetual smile into a complete display of teeth.

(c) The other gods of Olympus enjoyed superior adaptation, as compared with Hephaestus, and therefore gave the signal of it. (But in regard to this kind of superior adaptation it should always be borne in mind that it is not constantly at all stages of human evolution or even at all stages of the same man's life, necessarily expressed by laughter —that is to say, signalled by showing teeth. Physical superior adaptation tends to be felt less acutely by adults than by children, by cultivated than uncultivated peoples, by the educated than by uneducated. Thus, as Meredith observed—and he had no idea of the theory of laughter outlined here: 'We know the degree of refinement in men by the matter they will laugh at'. The Chinaman, the schoolboy and the savage are much more inclined to laugh at a person falling down and hurting himself than the cultivated man, whose claim to superior adaptation resides in things more purely spiritual—scholarship, taste, science, etc.—and who will laugh only at things which provoke the sense of superior adaptation in a more subtle and non-physical manner.)

(d) As Bergson points out, we laugh only at the human. It is the humanizing of the dog, by giving him a wig and converting him into an ugly and grotesque little man, that causes the animal to become an object provoking the onlooker to signal superior adaptation by showing teeth.

(e) The child in its stall is not being belaboured and shows teeth because it wishes to signal that it is enjoying superior adaptation to the clown. (The same remarks apply here as in the parenthesis to [c].)

(f) Ignorant people are inclined to imagine that their country, their language, their customs are necessarily the most rational, and therefore show teeth at anyone betraying another nativity, another language, another custom. Moreover, to be unable to master as completely as they do something which is such a commonplace with them as their own language suggests a childish failing and naturally an inferiority. In the first case, the very sounds of a foreign language suggest, to the ignorant, the inane gibbering of infants and lunatics, and the mob are therefore inclined to show teeth when they overhear foreigners speaking.

(g) We feel inclined to show teeth because we are instinctively impelled to signal superior adaptation to the extent of having our own hats on. (The same remarks apply here as in the parenthesis to [c].)

(h) He shows teeth because, knowing instinctively that it is the signal of superior adaptation, he tries out of vanity to bluff you into thinking his adaptation is still superior, and thus to damp your own feelings of superior adaptation and quell your laughter. It is all quite unconscious, both in him and in the crowd.

(i) The lady in Bond Street showed teeth all the time out of pure self-defence or vanity. Although her adaptation was for the moment conspicuously inferior, she quite unconsciously gave the signal of superior adaptation for the same reasons actuating the man under (h).

(j) Sir Arthur Mitchell, who investigated this matter, quotes the opinions of men like Southey, Coleridge, Lowell, Edgeworth and Kinglake, all of whom declared that breathing the gas caused the most pleasant sensations; often they spoke of the pleasure as being quite strong. Now, pleasure has from the beginning of time been rooted in feelings of superior adaptation.

(k) Here is a case of the liberation from the customary constraints or rigid laws of reason and logic, and, since every form of liberation is a state of superior adaptation, it leads to showing teeth. All nonsense comes under this head and leads to the order of laughter which Hobbes, in his explanation, says arise from ‘absurdities’ and ‘infirmities abstracted from persons’.

(l) The more dignified a person is, the more he challenges by comparison our own claim to superior adaptation; consequently, the more relieved do we feel when his superior adaptation is reduced

under our eyes for a moment. This, of course, does not apply to a case where we are emotionally related to the superior person by great reverence, respect or love, because then another emotion conflicts with our single-minded contemplation of the mishap befalling him. (Same remarks apply here as in the parenthesis to [c].)

(m) We fear no competition or rivalry from a horse, a child, an old woman or an old man. They do not threaten our adaptation; consequently, we are not conscious of our superior adaptation when they fall. But a child may show teeth when another child falls because possibilities of rivalry are present. One must be very low in the scale of human evolution to feel superior adaptation on witnessing the fall of an animal. (See, however, the parenthesis to [c].)

(n) We show teeth when embarrassed because we feel our adaptation is inferior and we wish to convince the company that it is not inferior. (See [h] and [i].)

(o) The mishap to a performer on the stage places him in a position of twofold inferiority, because not only does he cease to be master of the character he is acting, but he also ceases to be master of himself qua man. (See, however, the parenthesis to [c].)

(p) We show teeth only at the schoolboy howlers which we can recognize as such by our own unaided knowledge, because to know them as such through subsequent explanation is tacitly to confess that we might have been guilty of them ourselves, so that what might have been a position of superior adaptation becomes, if knowledge fails us, a position of inferior adaptation.

(q) We show teeth at a pun, in the first place because the repetition of similar-sounding words in one sentence is, as Bergson points out, sometimes unintentional and a sign of absent-mindedness (that is to say, inferior adaptation). Alexander Bain also suggests two further reasons. In the grasping of a pun there is self-glory (superior adaptation) at having noticed the play on the words, and there is triumph (superior adaptation) over the degradation of a nobler word …

(r) When we understand a joke in a foreign language, we show teeth with more than usual insistence because we celebrate a twofold triumph, that of understanding the joke and that of understanding the language.

(s) We show teeth when tickled, because, as Dr Robinson has pointed out, ticklish places are in highly vulnerable and defenceless regions of the body, and the threat to them in tickling is therefore so serious that the relief from inferior adaptation, when it is realised that the threat is not serious, causes a correspondingly high feeling of superior adaptation. Moreover, only intimate associates ever tickle one, and a bodily attention from a very intimate friend is usually met with a feeling of superior adaptation. Added to this is the nervous stimulation which, particularly in erogenous zones like the neck, is not unpleasant and is reminiscent (only racially so in the child, of course) of the eternal and time-honoured familiarities of sex-play, during which a feeling of superior adaptation is constant. It should, however, be remembered that all dogs show teeth when being tickled and rolled on the floor. Evidently, as Dr Robinson points out, the state of one who is being tickled is a very defenceless one; at any moment the ragging may change to a serious menace, and showing teeth by the passive party has probably therefore been a traditional accompaniment of this play for millions of years before man appeared.

(t) We show teeth on meeting a friend because we are gregarious animals and every friend means an access of support, strength and good adaptation …

When an enemy appears and we are in company, we show teeth, often quite irrelevantly to the conversation we are having, in order to signal to our enemy that we can be superiorly adapted without him or her in our lives. When talking to people in the street, if you notice a smile on their faces, or any hilarity, which seems to be out of all proportion to the matter you are discussing, you may usually take it for granted that someone is hovering about to whom your companion wishes to give the impression of superior adaptation.

(u) If we show teeth at a joke against ourselves, we do so only out of vanity to convince the joker that we are still superiorly adapted, or else that we are good fellows or ‘good sports’ or whatever the jargon of the day may be for the gregarious hero. If we are not vain, we either do not show teeth at a joke against ourselves, or else we show them out of courtesy to encourage the joker. (See, however, [h], [i] and [v].)

(v) This is a variation of (h), (i) and (u).

(w) We show teeth at a surprise or an expectation that ends in nothing, which so many investigators have believed to be the occasion of all laughter, because for millions of years surprise and expectation have always meant possible danger, possible inferior adaptation. (The Jack-in-the-box is the classical toy of this kind of comedy.) When, therefore, the surprise or expectation turns out to be harmless, or nothing, we rise suddenly from a state of apprehension (possible inferior adaptation) to a state of confidence and safety (superior adaptation) …

(x) We show teeth at an incongruity because it is the characteristic of a mad world, freed from the mental and physical bondage of logic, reason and scientific method, and in such a world, even if only imagined, we taste once more of the euphoria of irrational infancy (Freud) or merely of the joys of emancipation (Renouvier, Penjon and John Dewey).

(y) We show teeth at a good nonsense picture by Lear or Bateman because the figure or scene presented either makes certain human beings appear grotesque, or else is possible only in a world that has abolished the constraints of reason.

See (x). (The more harassed we are by the complexities of our real existence, the more likely we are to find superior adaptation in such scenes and pictures. Hence the extraordinary and increasing vogue of nonsense during the gradually increasing complexities of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.)

(z) We show teeth at mere caricature because of the reasons under (y), or because we happen to know the people caricatured and find their least fortunate features so spitefully exaggerated as to render them abnormal—that is to say, inferior—people. (It should be noted that ‘abnormal’ always means ‘subnormal’ to the crowd, who never stop to ascertain whether the aberration from type may not constitute a plus but always hastily conclude that it constitutes a minus.)

(A) We show teeth at disguises because they have the power of making the familiar unfamiliar, so that the ascent from inferior adaptation in presence of the unfamiliar to superior adaptation operates as in (w); or because disguises transport us to an unreal world—a world of nonsense, a fairy world, or some inadequately explored world of the past, which we imagine to have been better than this (see [x] and

[y]); or because a disguise may make a normal human being descend to an inferior being.

(B) We show teeth when others show teeth because we are gregarious animals, among whom moods are infectious. (We yawn when others yawn. Women cry when they see others cry.) The quality of sympathy does not, as the etymology of the word implies, lead to fellow-feeling only for suffering; it imposes on those who possess it, particularly the uncontrolled, every mood that is conspicuous among their fellows.)

(C) We show teeth at a good ruse, a good trick, a good case of diamond cut diamond, and also at a witticism, because we sympathize or side with the stronger party—the witty or resourceful speaker or trickster—and share his superior adaptation. (We only do so, however, in the case of witticisms provided the point of the witticism does not hurt or offend our own peculiar susceptibilities. We laugh uproariously at a witticism that conforms with our own fads or beliefs; we hardly smile at one which exposes or assails them. I have tested this again and again with mixed audiences of men and women by reciting Napoleon's witticism on the difference between success in war and success in love. Napoleon said: 'Success in war means surrounding your enemy, routing him and driving him from the field. Success in love means escape'. Without exception the men in the audience have always laughed at this, and the women and girls have always remained coldly silent and grave.)

(D) We show teeth at good mimicry or imitation (1) because of sympathy with the superior adaptation (skill) of the imitators; (2) because of the element of deception which, however, does not deceive us; (3) because, in the case of mimicry of persons, the imitation usually caricatures and therefore belittles them; (4) because when men imitate cats and dogs, elephants, etc., they humanize the beasts (see [d] and [x]); and (5) because of the incongruity—nonsense state—of the situation: here you have a bird or the sound of a bird, or a cat or the sound of a cat, and no bird or cat. (See [x].)

(E) We show teeth in a mock-intellectual way when, at a public debate, one disputant cracks a joke against his opponent, and we (particularly the less-alert intellectually) regard the disputant who has had the joke cracked against him as defeated in the argument, because

a crowd cannot help feeling, owing to the instincts associated with showing teeth, that a man or woman against whom they are showing teeth must be inferior. Hence the trick of raising a laugh against your opponent, which was recommended by the Greek Gorgias as early as the fifth century BC.

(F) The superior adaptation felt by most decent and normal people when they hear stories or references either frankly indecent or bordering on the indecent is really no different from the superior adaptation felt by the savage, and shown by him in roars of laughter, when confronted by a frankly obscene act or display. It is due to the release from a constraint—in this case, from one of decency—and to the consequent generation of an intense feeling of freedom and probably also of primitive and infantile irresponsibility and euphoria. It is also due in part to the fact that indecent stories and illusions turn almost exclusively on bodily functions, particularly those of sex, all of which are traditionally associated with superior adaptation. Of course, puritans who suffer from a neurotic phobia, whether of the functions of the organs of sex, or of some other part of the body, will not feel this superior adaptation or will repress it. Reminded by the indecent or salacious story of their neurosis, they will feel more inferiorly adapted than ever and will not, therefore, show teeth. The kind of obscenity the savage laughs uproariously at, … although more gross than that at which the civilized white man laughs, serves … the same purpose in savage life. It releases the onlooker from constraints and conventions, the only difference being that the savage is often obliged, not necessarily owing to the greater immorality of his life but rather to his greater familiarity with the sight of male and female nudity, to resort to more drastic breaches of what the European considers decency.

A number of further examples can now be added.

(G) A child smiles and laughs when it is being teased, a grown-up person does the same when he is being taunted, because each hopes by means of the bluff of showing teeth to defeat his tormentor by feigning superior adaptation although inferior adaptation is felt. Shakespeare said: ‘They laugh that win’. Yes, but they also laugh that lose, if they who lose are anxious to despoil the victor of one of the most precious fruits of his victory: the evidence of inferior adaptation in the vanquished.

(H) People laugh easily and uproariously in a court of law or in any grave assembly because, in surroundings of great solemnity where constraints and great individual restraint are imposed, any excuse to break through the irksome limitations of liberty is seized with unreasoning avidity, and for a moment superior adaptation is tasted and wildly expressed in the instinctive fashion by the most silent and most constrained of those present, the spectators. Hence the absurd ease with which judges, magistrates and presiding commissioners acquire a reputation for wit and humour … (Children have a tendency to laugh in church and at funerals for the same reason.)

(I) People show teeth encouragingly at anyone who has just escaped a serious injury or who has just been rescued from danger. They hope by the principle of sympathy to bring someone who is depressed by inferior adaptation speedily back to a consciousness of his superior adaptation. Mothers do this to their children after a fall or an accident that has turned out to be trifling.

(J) Nothing so intrigues a whole company as solitary laughter because, until the cause of the solitary laugh is discovered, everyone present, knowing that he lies under the suspicion of being laughed at, cannot rest until he has cleared up the mystery and set at rest the doubts about his superior adaptation which the solitary laughter has raised. Hence the familiar anxious demand: ‘Do tell me what you are laughing at!’

In regard to all these thirty-six examples of laughter (except those of feigned or bluff laughter), we should never forget Hobbes’s careful opening statement that laughter ‘is always joy’ and Darwin’s reminder that the laugher ‘must be in a happy frame of mind’. It is this element of joy in laughter which misled Voltaire into ruling that laughter was incompatible with ‘indignation’ and ‘contempt’, and he called it ‘joyfulness’. As I have already shown, we need take no notice of the word ‘indignation’ in Voltaire’s objection because not only is indignation in any case incompatible with any form of laughter (except perhaps the feigned or ‘bluff’ kind, and that is doubtful) but it was obviously introduced by Voltaire with a certain lack of candour to make his objection seem more conclusive. What is important is that Hobbes, like his critics, insists on joy always being an accompanying feature of genuine, unfeigned laughter. When, however, we have thoroughly grasped the fact that there is no

laughter without superior adaptation, genuine or unfeigned, what could be more obvious than that joy must be a constant element in genuine laughter? No other emotion but joy could constantly accompany states of superior adaptation for, as Hobbes in the sequel to his statement points out, dejection is wholly appropriated by those states which are the reverse of self-glory—that is to say, inferior adaptation. (*The Secret of Laughter,* pp. 74–87)

Having accomplished the first part of my task, which was to explain the meaning of laughter and its evolution, it now only remains for me to deal with the second part, which was to ascertain the condition men are in when they demand laughter with such neurasthenic insistence as they do today.

To those of my readers who have followed the argument [so far], this second problem will appear not nearly as difficult as the first, and in solving it I propose to rely chiefly on the valuable discoveries of Dr Alfred Adler, probably one of the most acute psychologists of the day.

In the first place, however, I should like to make the nature of the problem quite plain, and refresh the reader's mind … I am not arguing that there is today a greater capacity for laughter or a greater fitness for laughter than there has ever been. What, I think, can reasonably be maintained, however, is that there is today a more resolute pursuit of 'gelotogens' (to coin a word for the occasion), a greater exaltation of humour, a more determined demand for gelastic literature and turns of speech, a more slavish worship of humorists, and hence, inferentially, a greater insistence on showing teeth at all costs than there has ever yet been in western Europe, and if we wish to convince ourselves of this fact we have only to reflect on how sacrosanct, how supreme the quality of a sense of humour has become in recent years.

Neither in the Middle Ages, the period of the Renaissance, nor the seventeenth nor eighteenth century do we find this frenzied and monotonous praise of a sense of humour. We do not find men exalted or debased according to their possession or want of it. We are not told that the opponents of Luther, for instance, accused him, as they would certainly have been done had they been moderns, of lacking a sense of humour. We do not find in Puritan literature the Puritans accusing Charles I of having no sense of humour, as they certainly would have done had they belonged to the nineteenth or twentieth century. Neither do we hear of Charles I or Strafford or Laud bringing a similar charge against the Puritans. Swift, who

was keen enough to discover the flaws in his enemy's armour, does not hurl this most dreaded of modern charges at his opponents, and, as far as I have been able to study the anti-Napoleonic literature of [the] last century, we nowhere find a similar charge flung at Napoleon, although, from the standpoint of the man of the period, he deserved it probably even more than Kaiser Wilhelm II.

Last but not least, although Pascal certainly pleaded that saints might laugh at the follies of men for disciplinary purposes, I have nowhere come across any attempt earlier than the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to foist a sense of humour on God and Christ, who, in view of their exalted station, could in the eyes of the modern man hardly be left any longer without this exalted virtue, despite the adverse evidence of the Old and New Testaments.

There must surely be some reason for the enormously important place this gelotogen, humour, has come to occupy in modern life. There must be something behind its comparatively sudden elevation to the rank of a virtue so exalted that, on the one hand, the most studied modern insult is to deny that a man possesses it, while on the other hand, the highest honour that can be paid even to God is to declare that He is endowed with it.

Is it possible that, like all exaggerations, like all prejudices and prepossessions, which become exorbitant, it is compensatory? Quite apart from other evidence of a similar nature that could be adduced from most classical writers, Aristotle hints at the fact that the Greeks of his own day were hypergelastic. Is it possible that with them, too, excessive laughter was compensatory?

What were they? They were men who stood on the brink of the Hellenistic period—the period of decline and decadence, the sunset era of Greek glory and prosperity …

There can be but one inference.

This is a decadent age. It is an age in which, although longevity may be more general, the *joie de vivre* has undoubtedly declined. Quite apart from the millions who are acutely deranged mentally or severely disordered physically, and who are distributed over the asylums, homes, hospitals and special schools of the land, even for those who are seen up and about, working and playing, it is an age of much secret dysfunctioning, of much hidden debility, of terrible subacute discomfort—an age of much conscious

physical inferiority. The vast increase in the medical profession during recent years, the fantastic increase in the power of this profession, and the complementary enormous multiplication of patent and proprietary remedies (particularly aperients and aids to digestion) tell their own tale of unpublished, unreckoned physiological misery and desolation. Even the growing dissatisfaction with the medical priesthood and their power, and the surprising increase and prosperity of quacks and charlatans of all kinds, point to the longing felt by the population as a whole to be rid of tiresome and sometimes distracting chronic disturbances in their systems, and to resort to any means, however heterodox, to achieve that end …

But this is also an age of humiliations of another kind for man. It is an age in which man's environment has grown extremely complicated, and in which the complications themselves tend, though they are his own creations, to master him. Machinery is only one aspect of this tendency on the part of man's creations to master him. To a large number of modern people, many of the most tiresome complications of modern life are, moreover, quite incomprehensible and therefore wholly uninteresting. Thus, it is not merely the vast multitude of the debilitated today who are chronically conscious of an acute feeling of inferiority. Even the minority of the healthy and the sound, caught up as they are in the bewildering intricacies of modern conditions, are also constantly made to feel inferior, if only for the simple reason that the whole of the modern world is too unwieldy, too difficult and too vast to allow of an intelligent masterful survey of life as a whole. They therefore feel an impulse to escape from this complexity which makes a constant and frequently vain claim on careful thought and judgement by taking refuge in a sphere where no thought and judgement are necessary; where, on the contrary, the first principles of careful thought and judgement are everywhere denied and flouted—in the sphere of nonsense. And it is on this account, as I have pointed out above (see … [y]) that nonsense as a form of humour has had such an enormous and increasing vogue in recent times.

What could be more natural, therefore, than that this age, like the age of infancy and childhood, and like the age of Aristotle, should be hypergelastic? What could be more obvious than that it should unconsciously desire the tonic of showing teeth to support its sinking spirits? The aching feeling of inferiority, whether from debility or bewilderment and perplexity, must be quenched, stifled, forgotten. Literary

productions, dramatic performances, conversations, speeches —everything that fills the leisured moments of life must at all costs be humorous, must by hook or by crook raise a laugh, so that at least the expression of superior adaptation may be provoked and that the feeling accompanying it may be experienced and relished. No other genre can be tolerated, no other genre is relevant even to the most serious subjects, no other genre is good form.

‘Perhaps I know best why man is the only animal that laughs’, said Nietzsche, who had no idea of the theory of laughter expounded in this book. And he added: ‘He alone suffers so excruciatingly that he was compelled to invent laughter’.

This age, our age, is an age of much secret suffering, of much hidden inferiority. It longs, like the child, for the crown of laughter that will at least lend it for a space the feelings of a king. This alone explains the resolute clamour for humour today, the worship of humorists, and the ridiculously high esteem in which a sense of humour is held by all those who do not think of probing beneath the shining surface of modern life.

Watch the neurotic fury with which the average man and woman will defend the sense of humour if you attack it. Watch the persevering eagerness with which they display, whenever they possibly can, the whole of their dentition, even if it is false. Reflect on the misery of their secret lives, if you happen to know them well. Then ponder their unreasoning worship of humour as an end in itself. And if you do not conclude that the modern craze for showing teeth is neurasthenic and morbid, if you do not suspect that there may be some truth, if not the whole truth, in my thesis that showing teeth is the expression of superior adaptation, and that when it becomes excessive and compensatory it presupposes a decadent and consciously inferior age, you must be prepared to account for both laughter and its excessive pursuit today by a theory different from, and as all-embracing as, the one expounded in this book. (*The Secret of Laughter*, pp. 104–14)

Chapter 7

EDUCATION

In Ludovici's Who's Who *entry, under the heading of Education, one reads: 'chiefly by his mother'. And, as shown by his heartfelt tribute to good mothering in the section on Female Psychology (in Chapter 4 of this anthology), Ludovici believed that the love and encouragement imparted by his own mother had given him an overflowing confidence that lasted throughout his life. To Ludovici, then, education meant far more than acquiring factual knowledge. Of course, as an adult he did educate himself to acquire, in his own words, 'vast slabs of erudition', and as this anthology shows he turned himself into an expert on just about every subject under the sun. But for Ludovici education meant above all a training of character.*

Unlike today's instant authorities on childcare, Ludovici had been mulling over his philosophy for several decades before he published The Child: An Adult's Problem *in 1948; indeed, as early as 1911 he had written an article for* TP's Weekly *on 'The unhealthy cult of the child'. Ludovici aimed to provide a blueprint for raising children who would grow up into a responsible citizenry, rather than a narcissistic me-generation. Not that Ludovici erred towards strict chastisement. For one thing, he rejected the idea of smacking children. In fact, his friends' children remember him with fondness as being good fun. Sadly, Ludovici and his wife, like all too many advocates of eugenics, never had any children of their own. He must have had himself in mind when, two years before he married, he wrote in his first novel,* Mansel Fellowes *(p. 12), that 'there comes a time in all decent bachelors' lives when the paternal instinct, finding itself resolutely thwarted, cunningly manifests itself in the dark disguise of the proselytizer'. Ludovici remained a born educator to the end, a friend recalling that even in his late 80s he was 'so vital and keen to instruct'.*

Childcare

On the flyleaf of one of George Meredith's novels, all of which I was reading assiduously during my early twenties, I have come across the following pencil note: 'Children—those little monstrosities whose disproportionately large heads are beneath our clouds and who are yet treated as if they were above them' …

It is a little extravagant. But it shows whither my thoughts about children were then tending and indicates the annoyance I was beginning to feel,

which has increased to this day, over the modern child and the treatment he was receiving.

Almost three generations have grown up in my lifetime. I have seen each as children and I have found all of them more insufferable than their predecessors.

Not a child-lover? It depends what is meant by the term. If it means that I do not adopt towards children that attitude of prostrate veneration which has increasingly characterized the adult world ever since I was born; if it means that I cannot display that immoderate enthusiasm about them which leads most people to set them above adults, I am certainly not a child-lover. Perhaps my memory serves me too well to indulge in these excesses.

And yet whenever I pass any comment on a child which seems severe or censorious to people in the swim—that is to say, not really swimming but floundering in the shallows of modern sentimentality and sweetness—I am immediately told: 'You forget you were once a child!'

Forget? Is it not perhaps because I recall only too well what I was as a child, and what other children, including five brothers and sisters, about me were, that I take with a pinch of salt the raptures of my fellow adults about children? For it is on memory that the whole problem turns. It was surely no accident that Mnemosyne was the mother of the Muses, including above all Clio, the Muse of History. Because it is on memory that most judgements depend.

When I see a company of adults suddenly electrified by the intrusion of a child in their midst; when I behold the sometimes unaffected, often resolute reverence in most of their faces—for those whose reverence is affected resolutely display it in order to conform with a mode of behaviour considered estimable—I am convinced that it is not I but they whose memory is failing. (*The Child: An Adult's Problem*, pp. 11–12)

The question is: can it be good for a human being so early in life to be made to feel so important—more important than adults and their mature preoccupations? Can it be wise to make any living creature in its most impressionable years feel that it is a king, when it has no prospect of being a king? Is not the world already too full of these disillusioned royalties? Is it not only too plainly written on the faces and in the temper of most adults today that as infants they thought they were royal, and that now they cannot

forgive the world for having dethroned them? (*The Child: An Adult's Problem,* p. 13)

For this child-adulation which has overtaken the modern world, high and low, amounts to a cult. It is as much a latter-day cult as the equally suspicious and universal insistence on 'a sense of humour' and on 'unselfishness'. People pick it up in the air they breathe. And so anxious are all social creatures, especially the least alert, to conform with what their betters approve that a certain modicum of child-adulation is now held to be essential to 'decent' behaviour. It is part of the routine of good manners, *bon ton*.[30] It matters not that your betters are merely they who enjoy superior pecuniary prestige. You know no other 'betters'. If you do, you are an eccentric in modern society.

So deeply, indeed, do modern people feel that it is decent, well-bred and a sign of elevated character to defer to the child and to exalt him that they strain in company to excel each other in these practices. Often to the point of bitter rivalry, they will vie with each other in convincing all present that they yield to none in child-adulation. And he or she who outstrips all competitors in the contest passes automatically for one beyond reproach.

Conversely, he or she who holds aloof from the contest, displays indifference to children and, above all, refuses to allow a child's question or remark or antic to interrupt his conversation, his reading or his revery is frowned upon and held to be fit only for treasons, stratagems and spoils. Such a one may be thinking of the child's future, wishing to spare him the corruption of unearned homage. No matter! Not to conform with the rules of the cult is to offend against accepted usage and it is not forgiven. In the eyes of the modern world such conduct appears to betray a base and disreputable character.

But, to return to my question, can it be good for a creature at once diminutive and immature, unaccomplished and uncivilized, to be made to feel, at the most impressionable stage of its development, that it is of such supreme importance that it can dominate the giants about it? Can it be chastening always to the cynosure of adult eyes to have one's dullest remark acclaimed and to be able to force one's moods, one's tastes, on one's circle?

No sensible person calmly pondering these questions in private could possibly hesitate for a moment about how to answer them.

Look at it the other way around. If it cannot be good for the child, and if, despite its damaging influence on the child's future and character, it is still persisted in, it must be doing someone else good.

Who is it then that benefits? Whose interests are served by the cult? In other words, who derives enough satisfaction from child-adulation to make him or her overlook its effect on the child? …

It will occur to many that behaviour of the sort described is pleasing to parents. It is therefore good manners because sociability takes for granted a desire to please those in whose company we are thrown. No doubt mothers in particular appreciate any attention paid to their offspring. It is the surest and quickest route to their hearts; so much so that in the realistic societies of southern Europe a man who pays marked attention to a young woman's child is soon suspected of ulterior motives. Even the young mother herself, especially if she does not reciprocate the man's feelings, may become alarmed.

But in an aristocratic society ruled by values which recognize a natural hierarchy among human beings, and consequently not unmindful of the relatively subordinate position of the child, the mother herself would have been trained to know children's proper place, the limits of their claims on adult attention, and would in any case, whether coming from a man or a woman, deprecate child-adulation. At the first sign of it, she would inevitably suspect eccentricity or the strategy of indirect approach.

Even in a society long bereft of aristocratic values, however, a sanely matured female who has rid herself of her infantile adaptations, and who is genuinely concerned about her child's best interests, would wish to spare it the dire consequences of feelings of self-importance. Whilst in any society, of what constitution soever, the mother of a normal or large family, finding herself bound to apportion her own attentions in nicely measured doses to each of her children, would instinctively resent any stranger's upsetting her routine rationing of love and care by trying to out-mother her.

So that although all mothers may be peculiarly susceptible to praise and admiration lavished on their offspring, it argues a decline from sane standards if they can tolerate the kind of child-adulation and deference which is common today. The fact that now they not only tolerate it, expect it, exact it but also excel in it themselves, is ominous.

Another point may occur to many readers. Just as all young animals, owing to their fresh bloom, their sleek unhandselled appearance, their ‘mint state’ un-thumbmarked by life, make an irresistible aesthetic appeal, so children in this world of increasing human ugliness and ill- health rivet attention. The usually clean, sweet, savoury state of their organisms, their *beauté du diable,*[31] seduces us. They may not be beautiful or free from superficial dirt. But we feel they are fresh from the anvil—unrusted, undented, untarnished …

There is doubtless much to be said for this aspect of the appeal of children. For even if they too may be destined to be ugly like the majority, even if their sweetness is merely that of newly planed wood, there is always a fluidity about their form, a softness in their contours and a primitive fire in their eyes which carry off their other defects.

The aesthetic pleasure derived from contemplating a young animal should not, however, justify conduct calculated to jeopardize its future character. Unless, therefore, by some compelling motive serving our own interests we are driven to risk this consummation, it would hardly seem consistent with mature behaviour to allow our pleasure over a young animal’s charm to lead us unduly to inflate a child’s self-esteem.

Thus, it would seem not unlikely that this compelling motive in ourselves, which today inclines us to exaggerations and overtones in our attitude to the child, was too potent to allow us to reflect on the remote consequences of our excesses—a state of affairs clearly calling for investigation.

A further reason for the modern cult of the child which may occur to some readers is really but a variant of the aesthetic motive above. It consists in our weakness, as a nation of manufacturers and factory hands, for raw material.

The taste of the average English man or woman, not to mention the American, has for four or five generations now been notoriously in favour of the primitive, the inchoate, the crude—of things, in fact, which have escaped the modifying or transformatory influence of man’s mind and hand. This may be due to an ideology which spread through Europe fairly late in the eighteenth century, but it has perhaps been largely conditioned too by the surfeit of cities and of their artificiality in all highly urbanized countries. More potent still have been harassing complications and complexities of

urban life which incline the average adult to seek a restful respite from so-called ‘civilization’ by recourse to the rude, the simple, the immature and the raw.

Hence, too, the modern love of nonsense, which offers a sanctuary to the average adult mind from the tyranny of logic and accuracy in practical life. Hence, too, as I hardly need point out, the well-nigh universal preference for wild moorland, woodland and rocky open heaths before well-laid-out gardens, parks and all areas bearing the signs of human interference. Hence, finally, the average adult’s delight in children’s games and pastimes, in picnicking and in tomfoolery in general …

Now, children are the raw material of the world of tomorrow. To be with them is to recover something of the unexacting simplicity of unsophisticated conditions. It means contact with ignorance, in circumstances in which ignorance may be unblushingly displayed. The painfulness of accuracy, felt especially by women, is suspended. One can interest and even enchant by departing from factual knowledge. If one’s learning is poor, this is a help rather than a hindrance. One holds one’s own, an achievement constantly menaced with frustration in adult company. Adaptation is in fact easy.

Furthermore—and this is most important—success with children, as with dogs, is felt in England by both those enjoying and those beholding it to be a definite tribute to one’s character. It is looked upon as approval coming from rude Nature herself, from the life-principle, if not from God. There is something final about it, as if one’s worth had been subjected to a crucial test and declared superlative by the loftiest tribunal. It is a coveted certificate of ‘decency’.

To my pained surprise, Robert Hichens exploited this superstition, at least as far as it relates to dogs, in his famous novel *Flames*. And we have only to listen to the thinly veiled boasts of women in particular about their triumphs in the nurseries of their friends in order to appreciate that it is widely believed, if only in connection with children. Such adult conquerors of the child’s heart expect their listeners to feel more esteem for them for having found approval among infants.

Naturally, therefore, where such superstitions prevail there is a great temptation to try to achieve popularity among the immature, as with dogs, and this probably accounts for the determined struggle, often rising to bitter

rivalry, in which the modern adult world (or that portion of it constantly requiring fresh sustenance for its self-esteem) will engage in order to secure the approbation of children, without considering the effects of such behaviour on the children themselves.

Finally, as many readers may have anticipated, there is the factor of power. From Aristotle to Adler, the more trustworthy observers of humanity have maintained that ‘all men strive after ascendancy’. Now, one of the easiest ways of gratifying this impulse, at least in our relations with the living, is obviously to associate with those over whom ascendancy is swiftly secured, or, better still, with whom ascendancy is patent from the start. Hence the attraction of children, dogs and the poor.

The lady who is full of good works and an ardent amateur of slumming will usually be the first to feel snubbed if a friend’s dog remains indifferent to her advances or if a child fails to respond to her cajolements. Nor is it improbable that the relative unpopularity of the cat may be due to its generally cool demonstrations of affection towards its human associates—an unpardonable defect in the eyes of those seeking hourly reinforcements for their self-esteem.

But I submit that there must be deeper reasons than those enumerated above, and I shall set out investigating them with all my accustomed indifference to popular opinion and, above all, to popularity.

It is the more important to undertake this investigation, seeing that the adult attitudes described can have no foundation in any genuine concern about children’s best interests and ultimate welfare. (*The Child: An Adult’s Problem,* pp. 14–20)

Now, in the very air they breathe, as I have sufficiently shown, English and American parents inevitably become infected with the common prepossession in favour of childlike ‘innocence’ and ‘purity’. They are therefore, in any event, prone to be child-adulators. But as parents they are, in addition, subject to a specific reinforcement of this prepossession, thanks to a number of influences, all of which are not immediately obvious.

Among the obvious are the following:

(1) Self-love. This inevitably becomes extended to those objects, especially children, which belong to, are part of, an expression or a result of self. This factor influences the father, but it is above all potent with the mother. Freud saw in the love of parents for their children the

highest expression of narcissistic love, and Dr Helene Deutsch … declares that in women this narcissistic relationship to the child is, so to speak, biologically predetermined …

For this reason, if for no other, it is important that women should start child-bearing early, or certainly not later than the years recommended by the distinguished gynaecologists Drs Thomas Watts Eden and Eardly Howard (i.e., from 18 to 23), because narcissism tends noticeably to increase in most females of nubile age the longer they wait for the normal functioning of their reproductive organs. Hence the phenomenon, long observed by myself and others, that it is the older mothers who are more prone to spoil their children. Generally speaking, the younger the mother, of what class soever, the less she will be inclined to spoil her child. This seems to indicate that the danger of narcissism in the female parent, as might have been expected, is a factor to be reckoned with in the spoiling of children and constitutes a significant contributory cause thereof …

(2) Despite all the frenzied haste of the romantic attachment, which in ‘free’ countries ruled by Modern Thought leads young people into marriages without any guidance or advice from experienced seniors, mutual love sometimes persists between the parties to such matches for an appreciable period after their marriage. When this happens, their mutual love tends to make their children—or now, more often, the child—they have appear precious in a way that strange children are not.

(3) The inveterate will to ascendancy in all men and women inclines parents, in any event, to set their own offspring above those of their neighbour, no matter what the true relative value of the two families may be. Self-esteem alone ensures this result. For even if Beryl’s hair does not curl as sweetly as Daphne’s next door, she has other sterling qualities which establish her superiority.

(4) Our own child, moreover, is to a large extent the product of our own labours, prudence, vigilance and disbursements. And since it is natural to esteem an object in proportion to its cost to us, we tend, apart from other considerations, to be attached to our own child with a passion more complete than we can be to strange children. We know its price!

The less obvious reasons for the adulation of their own children by parents, some of which are comparatively modern, will probably be felt by the average adult to be less palatable than the above. They are:

(1) … [T]he attitude of adulation towards children may and often does gain strength from the sexphobia of adults. Regarding the sexual embrace as something shameful, or at least as belonging to the ‘lower’ part of our natures and our anatomy, they tend to look on children, who cannot yet have any practical knowledge of it, as in some way higher and cleaner than themselves. And since the parents of a child in sexphobic societies are, owing to their relationship, constantly reminded of ‘that side of life’, they are the more prone to venerate the child the more acutely they are conscious of the regrettable preliminaries which led to its appearance. They cannot help themselves. They contract these feelings from the air they breathe. Nor, even at this hour, can these feelings be dismissed as ‘old-fashioned’, because, in addition to the evidence pointing to their prevalence in the remote and recent past, we have abundant proof of their survival to this day.

As moderns, we may smile complacently when we learn, for instance, that Luther once exclaimed: ‘Had God consulted me in the matter, I should have advised him to continue the generation of the species by fashioning them of clay in the way Adam was fashioned’. We may also scoff at Lecky, who in the nineteenth century said ‘there is something degrading in the sensual part of our natures, something to which a feeling of shame is naturally attached, something that jars with our conception of perfect purity’. But we may smile with as much conviction when, in a book published in 1945, we find the author Geoffrey Pardoe writing as follows: ‘Now I do profoundly feel that the mind of civilized culture may without any bad logic feel that the sexual act is entirely repulsive, and recoil from its commission in horror and dismay. It can be looked on as uncleanly and “messy” physically, and excessive in the emotional sense’ …

To submit, as I do here, therefore, that a considerable number of parents—a powerful majority, in my estimation—feel the child, on these grounds alone, to be in some significant way more pure, and hence morally superior to themselves, seems unwarrantable. And this

feeling inevitably adds weight to the other factors now contributing to an exorbitant exaltation of childhood.

It is also probably true to say that it is more common among mothers than fathers. For, seeing that a large number of married women in our sexphobic society have few of the entrancing experiences which would more than reconcile them to their sex-life and give them, through the fire of their satisfied passions, a clean conscience about it, they find, when they view it critically, little to lift it from the level which Mr Geoffrey Pardoe allots to it. Thus it gets anchored to any feelings of guilt they may otherwise have acquired in the course of their lives, and, from the angle of this constellation of emotions, they confront the child with a veneration hardly rational.

(2) On the other hand, in this age of enlightenment in sex psychology, there seems little need to point out that much of what we know as self-esteem and self-confidence draws its strength from our sexual equipment. It is therefore important for the individual, man and woman, to make it plain to all that in them this equipment is both normal and efficient. And since children of one's own are the most compelling documentary evidence of this, each owes it to himself or herself in wedlock to give at least one such irrefutable proof to the world.

For whilst before marriage the normality or abnormality of an individual's sex-equipment can, generally speaking, be only a matter of conjecture and an unfavourable view of it can be but gratuitous and malicious, when once matrimony is entered the continued absence of its expected results may arouse substantial and more justifiable doubts. We know, of course, that it does not always follow that because there are no children abnormality on one side or the other may justifiably be inferred. But to the simple, ordinary, average being, the very suspicion of abnormality is to be avoided if possible, even at the cost of being pestered and exploited as only a modern urban 'Daddie' can be and usually is.

Hence children, and even an only child, may come to mean, apart from all else, an appeal to the strongest element in the average individual's self-esteem. It cannot therefore be unnatural for the parent on these grounds alone to become fertile soil for the luxuriant growth of child-adulation. More especially is this likely to be so in such ages

of psychophysical imbalance and pervasive inferiority feelings as the one in which we are now living. For where inferiority feelings are more or less universal, there will inevitably be an insistent attachment to any means of alleviating them …

(3) A third, not necessarily obvious reason, reinforcing all the others that induce parents to adulate their children, is one which this time I believe affects mothers more than fathers, possibly very much more than fathers. I refer to the very real and intense pleasure, never of course openly acknowledged, which adults, especially females, derive from fondling, hugging, squeezing and generally handling little children.

The mother who rushes to comfort a weeping toddler, and clasps him fondly to her breast, appears to the ingenuous onlooker to be following an impulse of mercy and compassion, altruistic in its origin and directed wholly at benefiting the child. At bottom, however, this is not so. Despite the fact that her darling is unhappy, in her heart of hearts she welcomes the occasion. She is secretly overjoyed that he needs the performance of her comforting ritual. For this ritual is delightful, and the way she will often prolong it beyond the time when its object has been achieved, even at the risk of cultivating or confirming in him a nascent tendency to self-pity, betrays her substantial share in the pleasure of the encounter.

Again, let me state that I am at present not concerned with policies or disciplines. Nor, I hope, am I implying that a mother should not comfort her child. I am merely illuminating the picture her comforting gestures present and trying to relate her feelings in the situation to those influences which, I claim, reinforce the original ideological reasons in adults for adulating children.

On this very subject, Dr Alice M. Hutchison … writes: ‘Because the opportunity of comforting a small child affords those of us in whom this [mothering] instinct is strong the most intense pleasure … we prolong it to the last moment, and quite lose sight of the fact that we are actually teaching him to love self-pity’.

Not only that, but also to exercise power over an adult! Because, as we have seen, if the child perceives that, by any course of action he

can adopt, one of his giants may be made to concentrate attention upon him, that course of action may become stereotyped.

Now, a mother has the maximum temptation and the maximum opportunity to enjoy this sort of voluptuousness, and a variety of circumstances in the home may be found for doing so unobtrusively. The woman, however, who did not feel that it greatly endeared the little ones to her would hardly be human …

Certain it is that the period of helplessness in infancy and early childhood is one which is only reluctantly, and through the force of uncircumventable facts, allowed by the average mother to give place to that of independence, and if they are honest most mothers will acknowledge that their happiest time with each of their children was the period of the latter's helplessness …

Nor is it difficult to see the connection between female sadism and the mother's predilection in favour of her children's most helpless years. For the determining element in all sadistic expression, however normal, is the gratification of the lust of power. Nature provides for the beneficent manifestation of this human lust in the normal female by giving her the one object on which she can express it under the presiding influence of love and tenderness, just as in the normal man it is similarly expressed under the empire of his love and tenderness for the woman of his choice …

(4) Another factor, peculiar to the mother of a family which leads her unduly to exalt at least her male children or child, is the profound pleasure the average woman feels over bearing a son. This is especially so in all societies where the majority of women, from what cause soever, are unreconciled to their sex and are in secret rebellion against their Maker for having made them female …

Suffice it to say, then, that, in those women who are not reconciled to their femaleness, their bearing of a male child helps apparently to assuage the constantly gnawing penis-envy from which they have suffered from early childhood, and this, by inspiring a sense of obligation to their male offspring, fortifies in them the attitude of child-adulation which in any event has other roots in their psyche. It all takes place on a plane largely subconscious and, in substance, amounts to the pleasure of having at last produced a male generative organ, but

the satisfaction the subconscious wish derives from the phenomenon nevertheless manifests itself in consciousness by attaching the mother inordinately to the male child, especially if he happens to be an only child or a last-born in a widely spaced family. Freud, at all events, wholly bears me out on this …

(5) I now come to the fifth factor, which, although unfortunately very common, is also usually secret. Perhaps the very nature of this factor guarantees its secrecy.

I refer to a specific manifestation of the will to power, or the striving after ascendancy, witnessed in parents only.

In the incessant, unavowed and resolute struggle carried on throughout married life for ascendancy in the home there are, alas, no weapons more frequently used by both parents than the emotions, weaknesses, desires and fears of their own children.

It all happens under a cloud of innuendo, suggestion, hints, gestures, non-committal acts, even grimaces, and deceit and duplicity are often part of it. Even a skilful observer may find it difficult to keep count of all the means used and all the incidents and fluctuations of the struggle. Only the clumsiest and more honest ruses are apparent, and the more coarse and ingenuous the parent the more obvious these are.

Briefly, it is a matter of enhancing one’s power and prestige in the home and, above all, of fortifying one’s self-esteem by trying to appropriate more of the children’s affection, dependence and regard than is secured by one’s spouse.

It is a struggle that may be waged with chivalry and honour, provided the parents are still fond of each other. But it may also be carried out with meanness and cunning, perhaps largely unconscious, and, if the parents are mutually hostile, it may be ruthless, cruel and persevering on a wholly conscious plane …

Usually it is waged, and must be waged, with a more or less complete disregard of its effects on the children themselves, otherwise every conscious parent not still under the dominion of the pleasure principle, would inevitably give it up. It is, however, prone to become widespread in all ages in which inferiority feelings are common and pronounced in the population—i.e., in all ages in which there is much psychophysical subnormality, disharmony, malaise and conflict, the

latter resulting from the random breeding among disparate stocks and biological types. Because, since the victim of inferiority feelings is aware of an enhancement of his or her importance if much more love flows to him or her, the attracting of much love becomes one of the principal aims of life. Hence the commonly observed desire nowadays to be loved even by animals, and the pleasure evinced when this love is openly displayed. The great attachment of the English to dogs is probably not unconnected with this aspiration.

Adler charges grandparents with being great sinners in this respect and with trying to appropriate the love of grandchildren by pampering. He says: ‘Ageing people are afraid that they are no longer necessary. They develop exaggerated inferiority feelings and as a result assume the role of nagging critics or soft-hearted good-natured elders who, in order to make themselves important to the children, deny them nothing’ … I confess to having seen many a child spoilt to ruination by his grandmother, but I have always ascribed the phenomenon to the older woman’s jealousy of her daughter or daughter-in-law, and to the resulting desire to supersede her in the grandchild’s heart if possible. But this does not conflict with Adler’s explanation; it is only another aspect of it.

Now, in the family consisting of father, mother and children, the line of least resistance in the pursuit of love is clearly that which leads from parent to child and vice versa. Not unnaturally, therefore, even in ideal homes a certain amount of rivalry, however friendly and honourable, though always secret and unavowed, generally arises between the adults …

(6) Akin to the above, but proceeding from a different cause, is the excessive love and attention often lavished on children when either parent feels insufficient love flowing from the partner. Again, this applies more to mothers than fathers but, as it augments the influences already conducing to an undue adulation of the child, it is of equal importance with the rest.

The masterly vignettes of everyday life which E.M. Delafield gives us in her numerous novels, all stamped with the truthfulness of a fearless observer, show us how common this factor must be, at least in English life …

It is probably one of the many regrettable results of the romantic match which, owing to the slavish imitation of English manners and customs abroad, has spread to countries endowed in the past with better traditions in this respect. For the romantic match, as I have shown elsewhere, by leading to extravagant and unrealistic expectations, perforce entails cruel disillusionment when these are not fulfilled. That they cannot be fulfilled by average human beings is obvious from the start, but the swiftness and certainty with which all hope of their fulfilment has to be abandoned induces a state of forlornness amounting sometimes to panic.

Then the ‘broken heart’ (or more often, in plain English, ‘the mortally wounded self-esteem’) flies blindly to the nearest source of comfort and reassurance, the child or children. These become the ersatz spouse, and thenceforward are subjected to the emotional transports whose normal objective has disappeared, and are cozened into becoming the ersatz source of love flowing to the afflicted parent.

(7) Finally, I must now discuss one aspect of the mother’s behaviour towards her children or more usually the only child, which, although not exactly an example of child-adulatory behaviour, illustrates an important consequence of it. According to my experience, it is much too widespread for general happiness and therefore of peculiar interest.

In dealing with adults given to displays of bad temper and sulkiness —and their number today is legion—I have repeatedly noticed that when they are casting about them for an effective means of paying you out for any envy you may have provoked in them or for any wrong—a slight, a rebuff or even a justified criticism—they take refuge not in the tactics of a direct attack but in trying to give you uneasy feelings, in fact a guilty conscience.

They usually achieve this end by denying themselves some pleasure which, in the ordinary way, you propose to enjoy—an outing, a visit, an excursion, a treat of any kind, a good meal, or the more attractive or more carefully prepared course in a meal.

Now, the characteristic feature of this behaviour is that the meals chosen for retaliation, and for hurtful actions in general, always indicate that in childhood the people in question must have had an over-loving and sensitive adult about them who was foolishly, perhaps,

but very really hurt, offended or distressed by such acts of renunciation, and who could easily be ruled, cowed or humiliated by them. I mean by ‘humiliated’ reduced to reversing or rescinding an order or injunction previously given, or to reversing an attitude, either of anger, indignation or criticism, previously adopted.

Another fact revealed by this behaviour is that the success it achieved with the adult in question caused it to become a part of their childhood technique in dealing with people in general.

Briefly, it is a pose of martyrdom which, though vindictive in its intention, seems to the unpenetrating observer merely self-denying. For the self-inflicted privations, although apparently prompted by a mood of humble resignation, are in reality acts of deliberate aggression. They are meant to hurt or wound.

As a rule, they take the form of refusing food, so I shall concentrate on this kind of covert attack. The reproach which they are intended to convey, as it were by a charade—for wounding words would give the wounded person a handle, an excuse for retaliation, or at least open his or her eyes to the fact that the voluntary faster was wishing to be nasty—is always: ‘See, you are causing me to starve!’

The reader feels like protesting: ‘But this is cutting off your nose to spite your face’. So it is. And if the temporary object of the fasting adult’s wrath happens not to care whether he or she takes the proffered meal or not, the stratagem is defeated and some other form of hurting has to be discovered.

From the nature of the stratagem, however, it is evident that its use must have been originally discovered only in relation to someone who cared very much indeed whether the proffered food was eaten or left, and that the continuance in adult life of the practice of leaving it when a hurt was to be administered is a typical instance of vestigial infantile behaviour.

Now, who is the principal figure in a child’s home who would be likely to react to this form of covert vindictiveness by developing a guilty conscience? Obviously the mother or mother-substitute. For, unjustifiable as may be the child’s impulse to avenge himself on her for having in some way, however proper, crossed him, his mother, unless much wiser than most women in her position, is the last person

on earth who can calmly look on while her child, ostensibly through her action, remains unfed. Her love, or rather her desire to retain his love, will so overpower her reason as to cause her instantly to repent with anxiety, self-reproach and feelings of regret. Exactly the result envisaged by the child! The action which led to his refusing his food, however justifiable, will soon appear to her mistaken. From this she will infer that she has been guilty of undue severity and straight away she will be defeated.

Her next move, calculated to expunge her guilt, will be to behave in a manner hardly distinguishable from begging the child's pardon. She will plead, coax, try to tempt him to eat, until it would become plain to a blind horse, not to mention an alert, cunning child, that he has shamed and mastered her …

The mother must have led her child to conclude that his taking of food was not merely a natural response to a healthy appetite but a favour done to her, an act demonstrating that their relationship was still friendly. Otherwise, the refusal of food could not come to be regarded as an act of disfavour, but only as a sign of a temporary loss of appetite.

But if we watch the average over-fond, venerating or merely ignorant mother, we shall see that this emotional attitude to food is exactly what she most painfully cultivates in her child—usually an only one, a first one, or the youngest in a widely spaced family. Instead of behaving in a detached and natural manner and, when he is at a meal, observing her child distantly, so to speak, she makes it plain that she regards his eating as a pleasure he confers on her, as a service he performs on her behalf. By little and little, the child appreciates that her interest is over-anxious, as if her personal feelings were deeply involved. (*The Child: An Adult's Problem,* pp. 96–121)

Schooling

Education, as organized by the state, can have but one object: the rearing of people who are fit to be decent and worthy citizens. A man may educate himself privately in vice, in jazzing, in motoring or in crime; he is at liberty to do this at his own expense and in his own time, but if he is educated at the expense of his fellow-men the intention of these fellow-men must be to

train him into a desirable member of society. Only thus can the huge outlay be made worthwhile.

Now, a desirable citizen is above all a well-conducted citizen. He may know French and fencing and be able to beat all-comers at billiards or biology, marbles or mathematics, but he is only a nuisance if he is not, in addition, well-conducted—that is to say, reliable, sensible, understanding and honest. It is more important that he should thoroughly grasp the first principles of sound conduct and thought than that he should know the whole of counterpoint or conchology.

When once he has mastered the first principles of sound conduct and thought, he is prepared to do well at anything according to his gifts, whereas the most exhaustive knowledge of counterpoint and conchology will, in the most favourable circumstances, only make him a good musician or a good classifier of shells.

In short, happiness and harmony are more easily achieved by a people holding deep and sound views concerning life and humanity than by people deeply versed in science and top-heavy with information. Happiness has been achieved again and again upon earth by people possessing not a billionth part of the knowledge that has been accumulated by modern man. A sound instinct in regard to food, a correct understanding of one's self and one's fellows, and a decent appreciation of the limits of individual caprice in a social community are, after all, more precious than a large accumulation of facts. And thus education, if it is to be valuable, should consist very much more in a training in manners, sound views and means of intercourse than in the acquisition of knowledge about facts. (*The False Assumptions of 'Democracy'*, pp. 126–7)

Anybody would have thought that one of the first concerns of any educational body dealing with national education would have been to secure to all citizens of the same nation, irrespective of rank, at least a thorough knowledge of their native tongue. For what, indeed, could be more vital? It is the first prerequisite of all satisfactory communication, whether from or to the subject; it is the first essential weapon of the rational faculties. A particular native language may have faults and shortcomings, as compared with other native languages; it may be poorer in words, more complicated in syntax, less copiously supplied with racy idiom, etc., but surely any national scheme of education that fails to make the mastery of

this native language—such as it is, perfect or imperfect—the foremost object on its programme is guilty of a gross dereliction of duty. For whatever its faults may be, the masses, at least, have no other means of communication and, if they are going to be made articulate, they must be taught their native tongue.

At present, the situation of the English working-classes is, in this respect, pathetic in its helpless and infantile humility. Their talk is the babble of babes, their vocabulary the means of expression for creatures whose feelings and thoughts are no more complicated than those of primitive savages. Not only are they incapable of understanding complex states of feeling or complex thoughts when they hear them accurately and carefully expressed, but they are also utterly unable to give expression to at least three-quarters of their own thoughts and emotions. In regard to a very large number of thoughts and emotions, which to the cultivated man are commonplace matters, the masses of England are therefore literally inarticulate. The same word answers for a hundred meanings in their conversation, all of which it but inadequately expresses, while for those emotions and thoughts for which they have no words there can exist only mute and mystified suspicion.

This is bad enough. Life is sufficiently tragic for millions of creatures today, without its being either necessary or desirable to aggravate it with the additional affliction of dumbness. And yet the fact that this inarticulateness which ignorance imposes, is equivalent to dumbness, or at least to partial dumbness, is surely incontestable.

But there is a consequence of this ignorance which is even more serious than that discussed above. And that is the danger to which it exposes its sufferers of falling under false guidance, misdirection and pollution from outside. Whereas dumbness, although a sad affliction, is often merely another form of constraint; misunderstanding, misinterpretation, or the inability to criticize and to reject the expressed thoughts of others may be a source of pollution, a source of grave error and a speedy means of complete and incurable perversion.

If people are to be protected from misconceptions, false leaders, demagogues and all those smart and slippery unemployed who are ever ready to exploit ignorance and take advantage of simplicity, they must be in a position to listen critically to an address or an appeal made to them in

their own language. They must be in a position to tell to what extent their proposed leader or misleader understands what he is talking about. How much false sentiment, false doctrine, inflammatory teaching is simply an abuse of language, a forcing of terms—in fact, catachresis. How much of it would be detected and exposed if the majority of the nation possessed that precision and understanding in the use of words which would come with a proper knowledge of their native tongue. (*The False Assumptions of 'Democracy'*, pp. 132–4)

The boys' curriculum at an average elementary school consists of the following subjects: English, arithmetic, geography, history, nature study or hygiene, physics, drawing, singing, physical exercise, manual work.

The reader will only need to glance at this curriculum in order to realize how varied the programme is, and how assiduously the subjects would require to be studied in the eight years of school life in order to leave in the minds of the scholars a sufficient knowledge of them to be of use in later life. Eight years, with 22 hours a week for 44 weeks a year, and such a programme! Can it be possible for the boys to acquire anything more than a mere smattering of each subject? … In fact, take it how you will, it must be acknowledged without either bitterness or malice that elementary education is nothing more than a very expensive and very elaborate farce.

It teaches the boys two things that they undoubtedly remember: the trick of deciphering letterpress, which constitutes them purchasers and readers of the lowest and most fatuous literature that sweated literary hacks can produce, and enough arithmetic for them to master the ordinary numerical problems that may arise in the daily routine of their adult lives. Of history nothing, literally nothing, is remembered, except perhaps that there was once a king who spoilt some tarts (they are not quite certain whether it was Alfred the Great or the King of Hearts) and that there was once a monarch called William the Conqueror. Of geography only the vaguest notions are retained, and these relate more often to the world as a whole than to their native land. Of hygiene, physics, not a trace is left, not even a recollection of the names of the subjects. While singing and drawing, except to the few, are a pure waste of time.

It is safe to say that this is true of the majority of the scholars and, since it is the majority of the children that constitute the great mass of the nation, it is on them we must concentrate our attention.

Since the object of all our expensive elementary school organization ought to be to impart to them some valuable knowledge that they can retain throughout their lives, some valuable knowledge, moreover, in the acquisition of which the highest faculties of their mind would be disciplined and trained, surely it would be an advantage in the first place to concentrate on a fewer number of subjects, and secondly to select only those which could be of service to them in later life (for they are the only subjects that are ever remembered), and thirdly to confine the study of the subject or subjects chosen, as far as possible, to those limits which, while they guarantee a solid foundation of learning, allow of further unassisted progress when once the school career is over.

Now, it seems to the present writer that no subject in the whole curriculum of schools answers these requirements more satisfactorily in every way than English itself. It is at once an ideal means of disciplining and training the mind, of clarifying thought and of correcting vagueness and looseness of reasoning; it is an excellent preservative of natural nobility of character, by opening up to the student the whole treasury of lofty thought and sentiment that the language contains; it is a mental weapon against befoulment by prurient and other deleterious influences; it is an instrument of criticism that can be employed at any moment, in any contingency, against the appeals of demagogues, agitators and corrupters of all kinds, and it is a means of lucid and logical communication, without which no man can be said to be safe against misunderstanding or confusion. Above all—and this is its principal value today—a knowledge of English is essential to anyone who wishes to know how to ‘read’. (*The False Assumptions of ‘Democracy’*, pp. 141–5)

Chapter 8

ECONOMICS

In his book, The British Political Tradition, *Volume 2 (London, 1983), W.H. Greenleaf sums up Ludovici's proposals for reforming modern industrial England: 'The social solution envisaged, a widespread diffusion of landed property, is in some ways not unlike that of Distributism while the attitude to industrial organization has a close resemblance to some of the proposals of the Guild Socialists. And although Ludovici is hostile to the growth of the large centralized state he accepts that public authorities must exercise a substantial array of functions for the good of the labouring masses, tasks concerning the health of the nation, education, the promotion of agriculture, procuring economic security for wage earners, and so forth. Politics is indeed no less than a science of enlightened interference to preserve national life'. This chapter covers Ludovici's ideas about these and other economic themes—the drawbacks of industrialism, the irrelevance of materialism, the benefits of private property, attitudes to class, solutions to unemployment, the use of leisure and the failings of economists—while Chapter 2 also has sections on Capitalism and Ruralism.*

Incidentally, Ludovici must have known about economics on a more mundane level. He transformed himself from a 'struggling writer', as he called himself during the 1920s, into the man who, when he died in 1971, left nearly £80,000. Adjusted for inflation, this amount would nowadays be worth many times that.

Industrialism

It is now 150 years since Dr Charles Hall … observed that 'none but the poor and destitute would ever consent to engage in industry'. But in saying this he overlooked an important factor in the recruitment of labour for industrial purposes. He assumed that the working-class people's repulsion to the kind of work offered by mechanized industry was wholly confined to its uncongenial character. Truth to tell, however, although this factor was potent in generating the feeling of repulsion, it was not so conscious as to be paramount, and in the majority it would probably have played no part at all if the remuneration for it had been sufficiently high. A vague sense of frustration and discontent would in these circumstances have persisted and resentment might still have simmered as the result of the general disagreeableness of the labours industry required. But wages high enough to

provide good living conditions would have blinded most of the working-classes, at least for a long while, to the deeper causes of their discontent, which were their dislike of the work industry imposed and of the conditions in which it had to be performed.

This is not true of a sensitive and gifted creature like Charles Dickens, whom no wage, however generous, would have reconciled to his job in the blacking factory. But he was exceptional.

Nevertheless, what Dr Charles Hall says of the kind of work industry offers, and of the reaction of the workers to it, was psychologically true enough, although for a long time it failed to create more resentment in their breasts than could be assuaged by increased pay. But, as the quoted passage shows, what Hall saw 150 years ago had sinister implications for our modern world. He recognized that the industrial activities of the West, and particularly of England, which have determined the principal features of 'civilization' ever since 1760, had created a traditional attitude towards breadwinning work in the labouring-classes which was one of pronounced distaste, not to say loathing. In short, 'work' for the vast majority of Westerners meant doing not only what they do not like to do but also what, whilst often impairing their human endowments, was an affront to human dignity and a menace to health …

Are we candidly to acknowledge that our civilization was from the first built on callousness and oppression and should, therefore, now be scrapped before the atom bomb destroys it? For yet some time ahead, the people expected to perform its unpleasant and sometimes heart-breaking labours may still be lured to them by ever higher rewards and living standards. It is indeed impossible, even at this early stage of our civilization's devolution, not to recognize that an element of compensation for disagreeable work is already creeping into our notion of a just wage. But obviously this policy must have a term. For if in its fulfilment every miner will be able to insist on possessing a Rolls-Royce, then mining will cease in a generation.

Thus, when Dr Toynbee sums up the situation as a conflict between freedom and 'the discipline that was the condition *sine qua non* for the successful performance of the technician's white magic' … , he is once more guilty of an understatement and an inaccuracy to boot. For our civilization has for centuries depended on many more forms of labour, amounting to irksome drudgery, than are contingent on 'the technician's

white magic’. We have but to think of all the monotonous back- and heartbreaking corvées[32] connected with agriculture (those, I mean, still unamenable to labour-saving devices); fishing; water and land transport; butchering; cleaning; scavenging; cooking; laundry work; loading and unloading; the custody of criminals, lunatics and mental defectives; even nursing, etc. Nor is the conflict limited to that between freedom and discipline. It is too often between occupations that endanger and those that preserve what a sane healthy man holds as precious in his being. Essentially, it is a conflict between work that is enjoyed and brings prestige and credit to the worker and work that is anonymous, disliked and incapable of provoking any social response, even if it is not pure drudgery. And since even work that is liked involves discipline of some sort, the conflict cannot be, as Dr Toynbee suggests, between freedom and discipline.

How modern rulers are preparing to meet these rapidly approaching changes, due to the evanescence of the old means of ‘forcing’ labour, and the majority’s increasing awareness of their power to refuse unpleasant fatigues, is at present obscure. No well-defined policy has been thought out. Even the considerable extension of the system of profit-sharing, which is only another form of higher remuneration, will not make the kinds of work which are disliked more likeable or conceal from the worker their unpleasant features. Confronted by what is known as the spiral of wages, all the authorities have so far done is to yield under pressure to every fresh demand and betray their helplessness by merely preluding every fresh concession with ineffective protests and objections.

But this cannot continue indefinitely. The fact that it has now endured for several generations, with very marked acceleration since World War II, does not mean that it can go on if the West still hopes to preserve its civilization in anything like its present form. Sooner or later we shall have to acknowledge that our civilization was born of forced labour and reared upon it, and try to devise a way of life from which all the features depending on forced labour will have been eliminated. The alternative is a police state in which the dictator or dictators wield the power to drive people to uncongenial labours by means of severe sanctions and their attendant cruelties. But unless the West ultimately becomes subjugated by a power ready to employ this extreme form of coercion, there is little likelihood of the authorities ever being able to adopt this solution of the present disquieting dilemma. (‘Work in Western civilization’, pp. 30–4)

If a quality, once acquired through countless generations, can by being dropped enhance the survival power of a species, there is no tendency in Nature to safeguard that quality from being lost by that species. This applies to fleetness, courage, agility, fine colouring, strength—in fact, to any quality which we humans might consider as admirable.

If, therefore, Nature's rule were now applied in human society, and the unfit or the least perfectly adapted were as a class allowed to succumb, the result would not necessarily be any more progressive than it is among the plants and lower animals. Let us think what might be the result. In the first place, more money-lenders, commission agents, stockbrokers, middlemen, lawyers, doctors and storekeepers would probably survive than poets, artists, producers of all kinds, agricultural labourers and science-workers. The agricultural labourer, in particular, with the François Millets, the Edgar Allan Poes and the Bernard Palissys of this world would be likely to perish, while the exploiters of human labour of all kinds would survive.

It should not be forgotten that the quality of those who survive depends upon the kind of survival value that prevails. Consequently, to allow the extreme effects of the struggle for existence to eliminate the unfit of today would amount to rearing a race consisting of every class of person who happens to succeed best in a commercial and industrial age, no matter whether he were a pawnbroker or a quack, an opportunist politician or an insurance clerk. If once material success alone became the criterion of survival, as it would do in this age, there would be no limit to the destruction of people who, although possessed of immensely desirable qualities, even from the standpoint of the less prevalent current standards—men like Nietzsche, de Quincey, Cervantes, Camoëns, Vondel, Tasso, Ariosto, Cardinal Bentivoglio, Corneille, Dryden, Spenser (to mention only a few literary men)—would be quite unadapted or 'unfit'. (*The Night-Hoers*, pp. 66–7)

Materialism

Many years ago, George Gissing, than whom no English writer was better qualified to speak with authority on the question of rich and poor, made the following remark: 'A being of superior intelligence regarding humanity with an eye of perfect understanding would discover that life was enjoyed every bit as much in the slum as in the palace'. In other words, it must have occurred to most thinking people that laughter, if heard at all, is heard quite as frequently in the kitchen as in the drawing-room—that is to

say, that happiness is relative and that the possibility of ultimate adaptation to all conditions makes the degree of happiness enjoyed by each human being more or less uniform. At all events, the fact that material conditions are the first which, if constant, cease to be noticed, and therefore cease to contribute actively to happiness, must have been observed by most people of ordinary acumen. It would therefore constitute a gross misunderstanding, both of human nature and of life in general, to suppose that standards of living even very much lower than those of our present unskilled labouring-classes would necessarily destroy happiness for those compelled to endure them. And, conversely, it would constitute a grave misconception of the nature of happiness to suppose that an improved standard of living necessarily brings happiness in its train or has anything to do with happiness. All those who, for five years of the Great War, had to live on indifferent food, imperfectly cooked, served in inconvenient and frequently filthy quarters, and on unsightly and grubby utensils, will bear the present writer out in this and agree with him when he says that material conditions cannot possibly bear the deep causal relation to happiness that so many solemn would-be philosophers now allege. Beyond a certain point—that is to say, when once the possibility of daily repletion with wholesome foodstuffs and sufficient daily repose have been attained—material conditions, so far from being conducive to happiness or unhappiness, are not even noticed.

To improve the material conditions of the proletariat beyond the stage of comfortable security, therefore, will not and cannot increase their general happiness by one iota. It may urge them to the mad hedonism of the rich; it may drive them to the surfeited apathy and neurasthenia of the plutocratic classes and stimulate their appetite for newfangled creeds and movements, but it will not increase their happiness. Neither will it do anything to alleviate the misery … under which they, like the wealthier classes, are now groaning. (*The False Assumptions of ‘Democracy’*, pp. 169–70)

Firmly established among his saddlebag armchairs, his warm rugs, his white tablecloths and bed-linen, and accustomed to the chance of fleeing to empty and private rooms when he has quarrelled with his wife, sister, brother, daughter, mother or father, the middle-class person looks with bewildered horror on conditions which are utterly unsuited to his unsociable, sulk-fostering and negative habits and surroundings. Forgetting that man is a gregarious animal, and that happiness is not necessarily

achieved by spacious houses, luxurious appointments and the constant opportunity and temptation of seeking isolation, he concludes superficially on inspecting the homes of the poor that those who inhabit them must necessarily be miserable. No error could be more foolish and at the same time more widespread …

Of course the poor will not contradict the middle-class visitor who assures them that they must be unhappy, because conviction in such circumstances may and frequently does mean obtaining something for nothing—the delight of every sportsman's heart. But as a member of the class which has the cowardly and spiritless motto of Safety First as its ideal, to suppose that, because the rent and the food of next day week are not assured by dividends, interest or a permanent salary … one must be unhappy; as a creature reduced in vitality and stamina by too many baths, too much ease, too much warmth, to suppose that people who have not the smug villa accommodation of a respectable middle-class quarter must necessarily be wretched, unhealthy and discontented; and, above all, as a creature secured by insurance and other safeguards from every possible disaster, to suppose that living dangerously—i.e., with risks and uncertainty—must necessarily imply incessant torture of mind and preoccupation is gratuitously to endow the whole of mankind with the mean, narrow and pusillanimous spirit of every surfeited and dyspeptic sybarite of Mayfair and Kensington. (*The Night-Hoers,* pp. 149–51)

Private Property

From [a] brief sketch of history we seem justified in concluding:

That great civilizations and great peoples have without exception been observers of the right of private ownership.

That everywhere this right has been to some extent limited, particularly in regard to the land.

That the cupidity, acquisitiveness and short-sightedness of man tends gradually in weak societies to convert any form of conditional ownership, or ownership bound up with duties, into private and absolute ownership, and that this is always a sign of political decay.

That wherever and whenever absolute private ownership has been extended to every possible form of goods or property, and has led to the accumulation of vast fortunes in a few hands and the creation of a class

wholly dispossessed and dependent in a wholly non-functional way, disintegration has always threatened.

That at such moments of crisis, the efforts of ancient legislators—Nehemiah, Solon, Pericles, Lycurgus, Agis, Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus, to mention only a few—have always been to avert disaster by trying to restore to the majority those very benefits which are the sole basis for the persistence of individual ownership as an institution.

That the grand experiment of medieval Europe in the art of combining all the privileges of private ownership with those of conditional ownership and duty, and of organizing the two on a basis of graduated rank and responsibility, mutual loyalty and obligation, must seem to us rather like a reaction after a long spell of ‘free’ proprietorship which spread throughout the Roman Empire as the result of Roman law, and at the same time as a development of some of the hardest lessons learned by the man of antiquity.

That in the comparatively recent system called capitalism—in which the irresponsible administration of wealth, combined with large accumulations of it in a few hands, is accompanied by the existence of a vast multitude of disinherited or destitute people—we find the recurrence of abuses and errors which are leading to a fresh crisis, in the anticipation of which the masses are again being taught, both by doctrinaires and circumstances, to call the institution of private property in question.

Finally, that after each phase of universalized private ownership and irresponsibility there has followed a reaction in which the very right of private property has been put in question, and that in its purely social and political aspects Christianity was merely one of these reactions.

Thus capitalism and communism are now at each other’s throats, in both the international and intranational sense.

Capitalism is a condition in which the best administrator of property in excess of a man’s physical and professional need, and the best testamentary disposer of such property, is assumed to be the person who happens adventitiously to be in possession of it. This is nonsense.

Communism is a condition in which the best administrator of property is assumed to be the central government. This also is nonsense.

These two forms of nonsense are now at death grips. It behooves us, if we wish to save our civilization, to find a way out of this absurd duel

between these two forms of nonsense, and in order to do this we must be quite clear regarding what is happening.

Against the increasing burdens of taxation, which is really expropriation and therefore partial communism, it is no longer any good trying to harden the right of private property either philosophically or legally, because it is precisely the hardening of the right of individual ownership that has provoked expropriation and partial communism.

Furthermore, against the claims of communism it is no good for the capitalists with their hands on their hearts to claim that there is anything divine or fundamentally sacred about the right of private property, because it must be evident without further enquiry that, if the definition of capitalism given above is even approximately just and fair, there must be an enormous deal in the present institution of private property which is both foul and indefensible.

On the other hand, it is no good for communists to reply to the claims of the capitalists that they hold a panacea for all the world's ills. For in this matter, as in others, the wise man, as Aristotle insists, will turn to experience. He with truthfully assert that he knows of no single instance of communal ownership having either created a great culture or people or endured in a great culture or people.

Even to the plea that communism has never been tried and that to condemn it untried is philosophically unsound, the wise man, without referring to the monstrous fraud of Russian communism, can reply that, on the contrary, it has been tried again and again, that it actually exists in a more or less backward form today in a number of backward races, and that it is quite impossible entirely to separate their backwardness and their settled inferiority in the hierarchy of races from the social principles by which they govern their lives. He can reply more or less as Aristotle did to Plato, that wherever he sees the principle of communism applied, in government offices and works, and in public services, no matter how highly civilized, he sees waste, inefficiency, daily and hourly robbery of the national exchequer, persistent extravagance of the most illusive and most undiscoverable kind, gross overlapping of duties, unnecessary multiplication of staffs, and above all chronic dereliction of duty in all ranks and departments.

But this absurd controversy between these two forms of nonsense, capitalism and communism, has already led to terrible bloodshed—it is unfortunately chiefly over nonsense that blood is shed—and is likely to do so again, and all to no purpose. Because, whichever side wins, the result is bound to be the re-enthronement of some piece of tragic buffoonery.

What, then, should be the attitude of the modern thinking man towards this ridiculous controversy? It is no longer either good policy or good humanity to rely on the trial and error method or on blind chance or emotion for the solution of this problem. We cannot afford at this stage in our evolution to be unconscious to the extent of becoming again the sport of circumstances. All too clearly we have seen the consequences of past generations having allowed themselves unconsciously to drift from one institution to another, and in the case of feudalism from one good institution into a bad institution, to rely any longer on this process of blind and automatic adjustment. If we feel in the least entitled to regard ourselves as adults in the historical sense, it is surely time that we became perfectly conscious and directed our footsteps on a conscious plane.

[T]he philosophers do not help us much. Too anxious to establish the axiomatic nature of the right of private property, they have given us no guidance, no criterion by which we can determine its sanctity, if such it ever can have. They have not helped us to distinguish between private property that is sacred and private property that is profane. And yet upon this distinction the conscious modification of our institutions must turn.

First of all, following Aristotle, let us see what there is to be said for private ownership. Past experience and the common verdict of mankind point to private ownership as a desirable institution for the following reasons:

> (a) It is the first prerequisite of individual freedom, both in the detailed and wider sense. (You cannot be free if you have to share one pair of boots with another man, as Lenin and Trotsky once had to do during their exile in Paris. You cannot be free if the overseer of a communistic state determines your occupation for you. You cannot be free if you do not possess the instruments or tools of the craft you wish to practise. In the wider sense, you cannot be free—i.e., at liberty to exchange a bondage incompatible with your highest impulses for a bondage that harmonizes with them—unless you can choose your

road, your path. And communism could not fairly allow you to do this.)

(b) It is the first prerequisite for the exercise and development of taste. (Taste is discrimination in choice, and you cannot choose unless you can command circumstances. This you cannot do without a modicum of independence secured by private property.)

(c) It is the first prerequisite in the formation of character and the practice of self-discipline. (Some liberty of action, some power of arranging one's own life, and some certainty that one will enjoy the consequences of one's own arrangement are essential to the moulding of character, and this liberty and power presuppose some lasting control of material circumstances. In the same manner, some experience of the regrettable results of a wrong arrangement, some control over self to avoid these results, are necessary to self-discipline. This, I suggest, explains the high achievements in human, spiritual and material products of those peoples who have held private ownership to be a right.)

(d) It is essential for purposeful leisure. (Purposeful leisure, being the means of creative thought, is in itself a creation of private property. Against this it may be argued that imprisonment, too, provides leisure and, in the case of men like Raleigh, Bunyan, Cervantes and Oscar Wilde, productive leisure. This objection, however, cannot be meant seriously. The fact of being incarcerated imposes certain unchosen conditions even upon the man who requires only a pen and paper; it limits choice in the use of purposeful leisure, and even in the case of literary production, which is the chief use to which prison leisure can be put, requires a certain minimum age limit, beneath which the experience of life necessary for useful writing can hardly be expected.)

(e) The less important but fairly obvious features of private property which make it desirable are: (1) It is economically superior (communal undertakings, as already pointed out, tend to become 'circumlocutionary'). (2) It promotes and preserves the nobler side of human nature—generosity, hospitality, patronage. (3) It is pleasurable. (To the best average natures, it is more pleasurable to be independent, self-supporting and free than to be dependent, parasitical and fettered. It is not everyone whose artistic inspiration can ennoble, or make him forget, a state of parasitism.) (4) To the man of average intellect and to

the classes beneath him, it is a very important condition of energetic and ambitious activity. (Not everyone can live so completely in the spirit as to be indifferent to material rewards.)

But against this catalogue of virtues there is a very long list of objections:

(a) Private property makes acquisitiveness, cupidity, greed and rapacity possible, and, as all these infirmities are human, all-too-human, they cannot be conjured away merely by a profound liberal or socialist faith in the essential goodness of mankind.

(b) Through (a), private property tends to accumulate in a few hands and does not necessarily collect where virtue or human desirability is most conspicuous.

(c) Having accumulated, it is frequently unwisely, viciously administered, and unwisely and mischievously bequeathed after death, under the very eyes of the disinherited.

(d) It is also used to desecrate the sacred possession of leisure. The vulgar and all those who, being slaves by nature, cannot be their own masters, make leisure appear ridiculous and purposeless, and bring it into contempt under the very eyes of the disinherited.

(e) As an institution it tends gradually to harden the sense of possession, so that in time people forget the contribution made by all to their individual property.

(f) In capitalistic societies it can be acquired in vast quantities in so many ways that have no connection with … diligence, good taste, great intellectual gifts, good health, patriotism or even common honesty that it is often profane before it reaches the hands of its owner. (Profits on stock and share transactions, on valuta transactions, on forward buying of commodities or currencies, on the cornering of markets, and speculative deals of various kinds not accruing to the advantage of the community at large—all of which transactions can be carried through quite successfully by a gangrenous, bedridden cripple at one end of a telephone.)

(g) In capitalistic societies, moreover, it is divorced from any function or sense of duty, so that it becomes a right without a function or duty, which is absurd.

(h) In capitalistic societies it also leads to the exercise of an anonymous, inhuman power over one’s fellows. Power over men is not necessarily bad, as it is too often assumed to be. But the fact that it

may be bad, and that in capitalistic societies there is no means of tracing where it is bad and where it is good, makes capitalism peculiarly nonsensical and vulnerable. (The spectacle of a degenerate, overfed cripple being carried about in a litter all day, year in, year out, by six stalwart, able-bodied and wholesome men who sacrifice their best to him would be nauseating enough as an exception, but the very justifiable suspicion that under the capitalistic regime it may in an occult form be almost the rule makes capitalism intolerable to all those who can only acquiesce in the power of man over man, when both the subordinate and the community as a whole benefit from the relationship.)

It is no remedy of these vices to retain a central government and to continue, or to extend, the expropriation of private property indiscriminately by means of taxes, rates and exhortations to charity. You might just as well try to rid the population of its plethoric individuals by bleeding the whole nation. Besides, all such methods are merely half-hearted concessions to communism and indicate a confusion of two principles.

It is not generally realized that just as Louis XIV, by his centralization of the government of France, defunctionalized his nobles and prepared the block on which they were to be beheaded, so centralized government in this country has made the functionalization of independent riches impossible, and is preparing the rich for the axe of communism.

Nor is it enough vaguely to demand the control of capital, as the Chinese did over two thousand years ago. Because by control, the modern world would understand parliamentary control by means of restrictive or puritanical legislation, so that all that would happen would be the continuation of the *status quo* plus certain additional penalties and constraints imposed indiscriminately on all capitalists. For instance, accumulations beyond a certain figure might be prohibited, and certain irresponsible methods of earning or bequeathing property might be stopped.

But this would be leaving things as bad as ever. Because wealth, even very great wealth, in certain hands may be extremely desirable. Power is not bad in itself. It only becomes bad if it is indiscriminately granted.

It seems to me, therefore, that the time has come when some discrimination should and must be exercised regarding this matter of

society’s acquiescence in the retention of power. Society has achieved the curtailment of power by rough and sweeping methods in the past, and we have seen kings and hereditary legislators stripped of their prerogatives. But never since the feudal system has there been any attempt to discriminate between which of two men, of the same claims and rank, should be allowed to seize power. And yet it is precisely the curse of sweeping and indiscriminate limitations and restrictions that they must necessarily deprive humanity of an enormous amount of valuable guidance and service, because they are always based upon measures calculated to rule out the worst type without retaining the best.

But, in order to discriminate, we must have some criterion of worth.

For there is no longer any time to lose. The institution of private property is being assailed on all sides, and if those who have the greatest interest in defending and maintaining it do not set to and purge it of its foulness, its abuses and its absurdities, this task will be undertaken very much more brutally and vandalistically by their opponents. But if we are ever to speak of and recognize such a thing as sacred property—that is to say, property that no-one would dare, without the risk of committing sacrilege, to take from its owner—how are we to distinguish it from that which is profane? What shall be our test?

We have seen that there is nothing either in history or philosophy to justify our calling any property in excess of the individual’s physical and professional needs sacred at all. It is by a mere fiction of law and habit that it ever acquired and odour of sanctity. On the other hand, no thinking man would ever deny that it may be sacrosanct. How are we to tell? How could any tribunal tell?

The test of how it was acquired cannot always be relied upon. Because, whereas he may acquire it honestly or even diligently, and in a way not injurious to the public, its owner may administer it badly.

The quantitative test is also useless. Because to attempt to set a limit to the actual amount a man may possess, as many legislators have done in the past, and to confiscate the balance, is to assume that no man can be a good administrator of property over a certain amount—obviously a daring and unjustifiable assumption.

St Augustine, followed by Wyclif, suggested that the test should be the quality of administration and that a bad administrator should be separated

from his wealth. The qualification for continued possession ought, therefore, to be good administration.

Hume, taking up this argument, agreed that for a wise and just man to restore a fortune to a miser or a seditious bigot was a just and laudable act, but that the public was the sufferer. Being desirous above all to defend the sanctity of private property as such, however, he refused to allow isolated cases of this kind to weigh with him. ‘Though in one instance’, he said, ‘the public be a sufferer, this momentary ill is amply compensated by the steady prosecution of the rule, and by the peace and order, which it establishes in society’.

But Hume had not reached our present position. He was not faced, as we are, with the alternative of justifying private ownership and of cleansing it of its foulness or of losing it as an institution.

It seems to me imperative, now, that St Augustine’s test should be ruthlessly applied and that, if private property is to be controlled at all, this should be a factor in the method of controlling it. But as a test is it clear enough? Is it proof against looseness of interpretation?

I venture to doubt it. But whereas it may be difficult to determine the quality of administration precisely, it cannot be as difficult to determine the value of property in a given community. Surely, however, if we may suppose it to be always possible to determine the value of property in a given community, it must also be possible to compute the loss or gain that a certain lot of property would register by the mere act of transferring it from one owner to another. It is the direst nonsense to suppose that property does not either suffer a loss or register a gain by being transferred. The policy of taxation and confiscation is built on this nonsense, and it is curious to find a philosopher as perspicacious as Hume generally is denying that it is nonsense—in fact, definitely stating that the characteristic of what he terms ‘external’ goods is that they *can* be transferred without suffering any loss or alteration. Truth to tell, in view of the infinite diversity of men, the transference of property without actual loss or gain to that property is inconceivable. To take two extreme and obvious examples of what is meant, let us suppose the transfer of two kinds of goods, a child’s toy and a wise man’s fortune. Now, if the first is transferred to an adult it is obvious that its whole value will be wiped out at one stroke. Even to transfer it to a child less imaginative and less resourceful than its first owner will lead to an

appreciable decline in value, which is surely capable of being registered. On the same principle, if the wise man's fortune be transferred to a gambler or drunkard, or even to a less wise owner than the first, its value must depreciate and, what is more, culminate in a loss to the community at large.

Clearly, then, the crucial test of whether property in excess of a man's physical and professional needs is sacred or profane should be to discover whether its removal from him will involve irreparable loss or actual gain to the property itself and ultimately to the community. And, according to this, we should conclude that nothing a man owns, beyond his physical and professional needs, is really sacred property unless its removal from him involves such irreparable loss.

Thus, in a properly organized community, the fundamental difference between the poor and the rich would be that, whereas the poor are not equipped to hold sacred property, the rich *are* so equipped.

In a healthy state, only those should be poor from whom property can be removed without either loss to the property itself or to the community.

On the same principle, the rich should be those from whom property cannot be removed without loss both to the value of the property and to the community.

Today, however, there is no such differentiation. Not only the communists and socialists but everybody knows that in ninety-nine per cent of cases the poor could now take over the incomes of thousands of the rich without any appreciable loss to anything or anybody, except the individuals despoiled.

Thus, the task of the future is undoubtedly to elevate the institution of private ownership above present-day standards, to create a wealthy class whose property over and above their physical needs would really be sacred according to the definition given above, and therefore to make it as difficult and onerous to be rich as in the best days of feudalism it was difficult and onerous to be a leader.

This task will hardly be accomplished unless we can solve the problem of organizing society once more upon a basis of mutual loyalty and obligation, of duty and responsibility bound up with benefit, so that from the lowest to the highest in the land everyone is in a position of honour, security and service. But apart from suggesting that, in order to achieve this end, government will have to be decentralized and much of the freedom and

absoluteness now traditionally associated with private ownership will have to be abolished along lines utterly at variance with communism and socialism, the problem is really beyond the scope of this essay.

Nevertheless, since to drop the subject at this point may leave many readers wondering how the above criterion and test of proprietary right is to be applied in practice, perhaps a brief outline of its possible practical application may not be without interest.

If the proof of proprietary right lies in the irreparable loss that would accrue both to the community and to the property itself by the removal of the latter from its owner, it is obvious, in the first place, that some sort of tribunal would have to be constituted to examine the question of transfer and to decide it. There would be no need of a central tribunal. Though its constitution would everywhere be the same, it might be repeated any number of times all over the country.

As to the constitution of the tribunal, the history of human institutions does not leave us in any doubt. From our knowledge of all corporations and bodies of men who have a certain reputation, a certain standard of service and certain common interests to maintain and protect, it is clear that those most ready jealously to guard the prestige and standards of an order are usually the men who belong to it. There are exceptions to this rule, the most conspicuous being the body represented by the peers of England. But generally speaking, except where great stupidity and blindness have operated as obstacles, the rule is usually observed. This is seen in the merchant and trade guilds of the Middle Ages. Members of these guilds exercised vigilance over their fellow-members in order to maintain both the prestige of the body and the quality of its service. A similar vigilance on a much higher plane was also exercised by the Council of Ten in Venice, which, by ensuring the proper discipline of that body, and by insisting on a certain standard of performance among the Venetian aristocracy, was undoubtedly largely responsible for the exceptionally long endurance of that aristocracy’s rule. Had the English aristocracy … possessed a watch-committee in any way resembling the Venetian Council of Ten it is most improbable that it would ever have sunk to its present position of impotence and insignificance in the legislature of the country, or could have sunk so quickly. And, in this respect, the peers of England seem traditionally to have been incapable of the most elementary measures for their self-preservation. Severity in punishing those of their class who failed in

noblesse oblige, and ruthlessness in ejecting from it any who brought discredit upon the class as a whole, or who failed even to reach a necessarily high standard of service and conduct, would undoubtedly have served the aristocracy of England in very good stead, and for the lack of a body that could exercise either they have sunk to the level of mere titled capitalists.

Within the Church, the legal and the medical professions, and in such services as the Army and the Navy, we find tribunals in existence for checking or eliminating undesirable elements in the system, and we find these tribunals consisting not of a state-paid judge and a jury but of members of the body concerned, because they know best how the prestige and power of their corporation are to be maintained.

Difficult, therefore, as the problem will undoubtedly be, it nevertheless seems to me inevitable that, if personal wealth in the sense of free private ownership of property beyond physical and professional needs is to be maintained as an institution, the wealthy themselves, who are those chiefly concerned about maintaining its prestige and power, will have to constitute the tribunal entrusted with exercising the disciplinary functions within the order. And since it must be either this or communism, it seems ridiculous to argue that the thing is not practicable. It is as practicable as anything is practicable that is really and earnestly desired. In any case, it cannot be argued that it is any less practicable than the Council of Ten. It needs only courage and determination. If, however, the rich approach the matter with the firm middle-class resolve of having nothing whatsoever to do with any undertaking that promises to be in the least bit unpleasant; if they feel themselves constitutionally and mentally incapable of ruling out of their order, by their own deliberate act, a man or woman who was yesterday playing golf with them or hunting with them, simply because perchance he or she is such a pleasant person and has not been guilty of a sexual crime or anything really shameful from the sexphobia standpoint, then it seems to me that their case is hopeless, and they can only do what the Lords did during the nineteenth century—await their gradual demise with calm and resignation.

If, on the other hand, they appreciate the gravity of the alternative and the inevitability of its advent should matters be allowed to drift, it seems as if there were yet time to save the institution of private property, more particularly as those who undertake this task will have the whole world of

small possessors, down to the man whose only wealth is a gold watch, to support them. (*The Sanctity of Private Property*, pp. 29–45)

Class

Class now means barriers and cleavage between the various social grades of the nation. It means that social intercourse between these various grades, if not forbidden, is at least not countenanced. Class, in this sense, amounts to a nation, or many nations, within the nation. This is wrong and must cease. It is a convention created by snobbery and ends only in what Marx thought must culminate in the class struggle.

Class should mean merely a group which makes its own peculiar contribution to the general welfare. Thus there is the group of farmworkers, that of the doctors, that of the dustmen and that of the lawyers. Such groups are merely bodies doing different work in the field of national endeavour. Their differences should be based only on natural endowment and taste. No group, however humble its work, should therefore inspire aloofness, any more than do the differences of function between the members of a football team. In this sense, class should not necessarily involve any barriers or cleavage. Conquest may have been the origin of class where cleavage is most rigid. But it is chiefly through function or occupation that caste and class have arisen, and function involves no necessary cleavage.

Can the industrial magnate do his job efficiently without his charwoman or his fishmonger? If he cannot, his charwoman and his fishmonger are as necessary to the whole as he is. They are all united in a common task and purpose. Does this mean that he should raise his hat to his charwoman and his fishmonger’s wife as he does to his vicar’s wife? If hat-raising to women is a desirable act of courtesy, it certainly does. If mixing socially with them gives all parties pleasure, why not? These seem small concessions, but bear in mind that they are denied today. This leads to a more or less complete lack of social contact between certain groups in the nation and is a constant affront, especially to those conscious of any personal worth. But it is an essential feature of our dangerous class cleavage.

This cleavage has not been created by any instinctive mutual dislike between different groups of workers. It has been created by the refusal of snobs to be mistaken for their supposed inferiors. Those whose false positions of power were secured only through money found it impossible to

command respect by the innate distinction which is recognized at once. They were afraid of mingling with their subordinates lest they should be mistaken for them. They therefore invented insuperable barriers to keep them apart. Unable to depend on quality, they created cleavage. It is this cleavage that society must remove. Its removal, however, will mean re-education on a vast scale. (‘What do we mean by “class”?’, p. 765)

As the result either of the ridiculous pomposity of those who have acquired riches by commerce or industry, or else of the questionable title to superiority that wealth alone confers, a curious phenomenon began to be noticeable in England during the course of the latter half of the seventeenth century, and that was a certain artificial and asinine haughtiness among the well-to-do which made them unable to unbend in the presence of those whose purses were less portentously swollen. It is suggested that this became noticeable in the latter half of the seventeenth century, but, truth to tell, all the causes of it were in existence in the middle of the previous century as the result of Henry VIII’s vulgar and disastrous reign. Most authorities would, however, admit that the phenomenon as a marked innovation became noticeable only in the seventeenth century.

Theretofore, wealth and good breeding, wealth and good family, wealth and sound instinct, wealth and good manners had, with but few and notorious exceptions, been the only kinds of wealth known.

Suddenly, however, with the capitalistic exploitation of the land, the nation’s mineral resources and her people, a new kind of wealth came into existence, wealth utterly unconnected with anything except the most solemn and most self-complacent vulgarity in those who possessed it.

These people, unable to rely upon those natural distinctions that everybody recognises at once, which compel the inferior or the fool instinctively to refrain from importunacies, and restrain the too familiar hand, were forced to adopt a new method of holding their brethren, so like themselves in all but brass, satisfactorily aloof. How did they accomplish this? Since they had no natural dignity, no innate distinction, which might have allowed them to befriend the poor with impunity, without any fear, that is to say, of ‘losing caste’; since they could not be classified apart from their poorer fellows except by means of the ticket ‘wealth’, they invented barriers and gulfs which were designed to be as wide and insuperable as

their fear of being taken for their poorer fellows was great. Being unable to rely upon classification, they proceeded by means of cleavage.

The foolish and foolhardy expedient on the part of the vulgar rich, which has survived to this day, has led to the absurd anomaly of a society—a community, if you please—in which a whole complicated series of stratified groups never meet, never in any circumstances communicate with one another, except with the most ludicrous grimaces, compressed lips, whispers, frowns, embarrassment, fear, contempt and hatred.

The wonder is not that society constituted on these lines is now falling to pieces; the miracle is that it should have lasted so long.

Think of it—think of the advantage of friendly and free communication. Think of how much is gained, even among equals, by constant and unrestrained intercourse. Reckon the inestimable profit that a man of minor attainments can derive from free and easy association with his superior, and vice versa. And then ponder the thousands of unbreakable links that such relationships would have forged between the classes in every village, town, city, country and province throughout the Empire.

When is it that a man ceases to believe in natural distinctions between men? When is it he begins to suspect that there is nothing above him? Only when, for a very long time, he has been deprived of any intimate knowledge of superiority, or of any association with superiority in his own form.

Can we wonder at the absurd decoy cries of modern Europe—at the cry for equality, above all? Can we marvel any longer at class hatred? How does a man best learn the fundamental law of natural inequality? Only by moving out of his circle and finding a sufficiently friendly welcome when he does so to be able to learn from what he sees.

The principle of cleavage instead of classification—this is one of the vices for which we have to thank the vulgar rich of the past and their kith and kin of the present day. But it is one of the first brutal stupidities that must be abolished if anything approaching an orderly and harmonious society is to be established. (*The False Assumptions of ‘Democracy’*, pp. 208–11)

I do regard labour camps as desirable. I have visited them in Germany, and I have seen them at work, and I think they are a good thing—for various reasons. First, they tend to mingle all classes together and therefore don’t allow class prejudice to develop in your people. They inculcate

discipline upon those who join them—at a time, very often, when it is most essential that some sort of discipline, both mental and physical, should be undergone. And, thirdly, they give everybody in the nation a rigorous bodily training and a knowledge of hard work. That is to say, men who are going to be lawyers or doctors find out how to wield a spade, and in later life they are far more likely to have sympathies with those who get their living by a spade. (‘Efficiency and liberty’, p. 531)

Unemployment

The very system upon which our industrial life is based makes unemployment inevitable. The industrial life of the country could not be carried on if there were not a large reservoir of ‘hands’ always ready to be tapped at a moment’s notice. In fact, tenders for large contracts could not safely be forwarded to their destination if the contractor were not confident that at a given moment he could swell his working staff by hundreds or thousands.

But if there were no unemployed, whence could he draw the men for his suddenly increased working staff? From other industries? That would not work, for he could only do so by (a) paralysing those other industries and (b) by enticing their hands over by a rate of pay sufficiently higher to make them inclined to move. Besides, who can determine how many sudden calls of this kind might occur at once in our present hand-to-mouth method of organization? Can we imagine every one of such firms robbing the other of necessary hands? Obviously not. Then it follows that with our present system a reservoir of available workmen, not otherwise employed, is a necessity. The mistake in the past has been to regard the personnel of such a reservoir as coming within the category of beggars or paupers. Nor has the insurance against unemployment adequately solved the problem. A reservoir of unemployed men should be permanently maintained by each industry as a normal charge upon that industry. They should be regarded as performing a function quite as useful and essential as that of their brothers in work, like the reserve forces of a fighting army. And although it may be difficult at any precise moment to determine how large this reservoir should be, a certain safe minimum, based on the production of each industry over a number of years, might surely be arrived at. (*The Night-Hoers*, pp. 42–3)

Leisure

Just as we derive our notion of work from the breadwinning occupations of the masses during the last century and a half, so do we derive our notion of leisure from the pastimes of the majority of those who are above work—a notion that was well-established long before any sort of out-of-work benefit was dreamt of.

Who are these unoccupied people who have given us our modern notion regarding leisure, and what do they do?

For the most part they are people of ample means, enjoying positions of complete independence, and probably more free than any wealthy class has ever been of onerous civic duties or obligations. The few of these which they have can easily be discharged by a cash payment. As a class, therefore, they are to a great extent people who have had that chance of choosing a bondage compatible with their higher impulses, which is denied their less fortunate brethren. Only the fewest among them, however—a handful of successful playwrights, novelists, artists, architects, engineers, etc.—have ever won their independence by creating anything. If, therefore, the majority ever had any higher impulses to express, these were certainly not expressed in the means by which their independence was acquired.

Nor from the manner in which they occupy their days does it appear as if their ever-present chance to enter a bondage compatible with their higher impulses was being seized for this purpose. We are consequently led to suspect either that they were from the first inferior folk with atrophied higher impulses or else that the nature of their ancestors' climb to independence was such that higher impulses were not required, with the result that their stock is devoid of such qualities.

A third possibility is this: they may be people who suffer under the boredom and sterility of their lives; they may long to express their higher impulses in some form of creative activity. But as in the majority of them this longing, if gratified, would probably direct them to work which is now considered menial, because it is usually performed by the wage-slave, they refrain out of snobbery from doing anything at all.

For their lives of leisure are characterized by these two features: that they do not for one minute of the day do anything that constitutes the work of the wage-earning class, and that, as a rule, they do not instinctively turn to any form of creation.

If their activities exhibit any general character at all, it is that peculiar to recreation rather than to creation. They are the kind of activities that constitute the recuperation of people usually engaged in creation, or of people who, by force of circumstances, are daily engaged in harassing uncreative work and who, wearied and besotted by the latter, turn to these activities for a change, for exercise in the open air and for oblivion. Such activities are, for instance, playing or watching games; pursuing or watching the pursuit of various sports; attending parties, exhibitions, commercial entertainments or race-meetings; travelling or climbing; reading for distraction; dancing; promiscuous fornication, etc.

These activities, however, are all stamped with the sterility associated with the recreations of the creator. But in the case of the privileged classes, nothing has, as a rule, been previously created. They recuperate themselves from the first to the seventh day not because they have looked on their work and seen that it is very good, but because it is a mark of their class not to do any work, not to be bound to any tasks and therefore to pursue sterile recreation as an end in itself.

We have thus come to connect leisure, which is the peculiar possession of the privileged class, not with creative impulses or with creation, or with recuperation following the latter, but with recreation pursued as a vocation. And we have come to do this chiefly because this privileged class is jealous of its distinctions from the wage-earning class; because work has in the last century and a half acquired an unhappy meaning, and probably too because the privileged class consists to a great extent of people recruited from generations of middle or middling men who have stood with sterile but successful material results between producer and consumer.

But the probability that the members of this privileged class are not normal human beings is suggested, I believe, by the following significant facts:

(1) The frequently frantic and neurotic nature of their pastimes; their love of speed, for instance, as an end in itself.

(2) The common occurrence of neuroses or signs of neurasthenia among them. The practice of psychiatrists and certainly of psycho-analysts is, to a disproportionate extent, confined to them.

(3) Their incurable restlessness, which is always an unconscious indication of profound discontent.

(4) Their generally low physical condition. A large proportion of them constitute the principal support of nursing homes and the latter's expensive medical attendants, despite the fact that this class has all day and every day to attend intelligently to its normal physical needs.

(5) The evidence we have that, among the best of those who are deprived by their station in life of the chance of productive labour, there is a tendency to return by hook or by crook to production of some sort; hence the clockmaking of Louis XVI (an exclusively skilled craftsman's pursuit before the mass-production of clocks), the tree-felling of Gladstone and Kaiser Wilhelm II, the ornithological researches of ex-King Ferdinand of Bulgaria, etc.

Thus I submit that today our notions of both work and leisure are corrupt, and that it is essential before discussing unemployment, mechanized industry and the problems which they hold out for the future to rid our minds of these corrupt notions; otherwise, our solution of these problems cannot possibly be wiser or more profound than that of any other modern thinker, sociologist or politician.

I suggest that the first prerequisite for a satisfactory approach to the whole question of unemployment and the prospect of an unprecedented increase of unemployment in the near future is to appreciate that a healthy human being has no natural bent for perpetual recreation, but a native and irrepressible inclination to be constantly creative. I suggest that the higher impulses of such a creature are never and can never be expressed except in some form of creation, no matter how humble, and that sterile recreation, as a permanent activity, cannot be the natural pastime of mankind as a whole. Only in the form of recurrent interruption does recreation take a normal place in human life, and then it constitutes the respite, the recuperation, of people engaged in some form of creative activity according to their capacities. (*Creation or Recreation*, pp. 18–21)

It is a matter of common experience that every sane and healthy man who happens to be engaged in some non-productive activity, or an activity depriving him of the natural spiritual rewards of his industry, always tries, if he has not been wholly besotted by the modern system, to redeem his self-esteem and to indulge his higher impulses by pursuing some productive or creative hobby at home. It may be gardening, carpentry, wood-carving, modelling, ceramic work or merely photography, but it is certain he will do something of the kind. On the other hand, among those whose life-work

gives them the opportunity every day of producing or creating something, we do not find this same eagerness for hobbies or productive pastimes in leisure hours. Neither my grandfather nor my father, both of whom were artists, had any hobbies. As far as I know, and I knew both men well, neither Rodin nor Whistler had any hobbies. No artist I have ever known—and I was brought up among painters, gravers and sculptors—ever had a productive pastime apart from his daily artistic activity. (*Creation or Recreation,* p. 24)

Economists

Surely it must soon become evident to our learned sociologists and economists that the attempt to explain, illustrate or support our own civilized institutions by a study of the institutions of existing or past primitive peoples cannot fail, quite apart from the sentimental bias behind it, to prove the sorriest waste of useful energy, because it is always open to the sceptic to ask whether the fact that these existing primitive peoples have remained at the bottom of the hierarchy of races may not be due to the very institutions which we study with so much reverence and humility. In any case, the attempt to base upon such anthropological data any rule for the observance of modern mankind, or any first principle on which to build a system, must be unscientific, because at best these data cannot tell more than an incomplete story—the story of the most backward peoples. They must omit the very earliest history of those races whom we have known or can know only as civilized or half-civilized. (*The Sanctity of Private Property,* p. 9)

It is often alleged that political systems, and even a nation’s religious, social and moral convictions, arise out of its economic conditions. This is a standpoint constantly emphasized by the communists, and is generally acceptable to all those who are inclined to lay particular stress on environmental as opposed to hereditary influences.

I submit that what history teaches is, rather, that economic conditions, together with the religious, social and moral convictions associated with them, are preeminently the creation of national character, and that this national character is predominantly determined by heredity or what is popularly known as race and better referred to as type or stock.

Further, I submit that, when once a well-established national character has established the institutions and customs suited to its peculiar capacities,

tastes and virtues, these institutions can be modified not by moral suasion or argument but only by a determined attack on the national character itself, which in practice means an attack on the national type or stock. (*English Liberalism*, p. 1)

Chapter 9

ART

Ludovici grew up surrounded by artists. His mother was apparently a fine actress, though forbidden by her father to have a career on the stage. And both Ludovici's father and paternal grandfather were professional painters, his father, Albert Ludovici, leaving a record of his own career in An Artist's Life in London and Paris, 1870–1925 *(London, 1926). A skilful artist himself, Anthony Ludovici drew the cartoons for a couple of humorous books when he was still a youth—Mary Kernahan's* Nothing But Nonsense *and The Belgian Hare's* The Duke of Berwick*—and for his own books painted some delightful book-jackets. Such was his talent that Jane Fry, one of England's leading architects, owned with pride a self-portrait that Ludovici had painted as a young man. For a couple of years Ludovici worked as a private secretary to the great French sculptor Auguste Rodin, and he recalled those times in a memoir. In Ludovici's early days as a journalist, before the First World War interrupted his career, he wrote art criticism for the cultural magazine* The New Age[33] *and he also gave lectures at London University, later published in book-form, on 'Nietzsche and art'. The philosophy of Nietzsche had impressed on Ludovici that the best art must be representational, rather than abstract, though not slavishly realistic, either, and that the highest subject-matter for an artist is man.*

To judge from Ludovici's books, essays and reviews he approved of such artists as Inigo Jones, Chardin, Velasquez, Goya, William Blake, Van Gogh, Gauguin, Alfred Stevens and Augustus John. He may have admired these Europeans, but he worshipped the stately art of ancient Egypt. In Ludovici's novel Catherine Doyle *(pp. 32–3) the Egyptologist Swynnerton, who seems to have been Ludovici's alter ego, declares:*

> *'The Greeks have been ridiculously overrated … We have had our classical Renaissance simply because Egypt was not known to the people of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. But do you know what I am looking forward to? I am looking forward to a revival of the art of the Nile. Hours and hours have I sat and contemplated these Egyptian monuments, until I loved all their quiet dignified lines and their restful majesty. And then I would walk sharply down to where the Greek statues stand, and again and again I have felt that they were all dancing the hornpipe or the cock-a-hoop. How is it that this*

terpsichorean art has oppressed us so long? It is scarcely eighty years ago that the Rosetta Stone first gave us the key to Egypt; let us hope that there is still some chance of an Egyptian Renaissance. I live for it. I long for it'.

Low Art

The art of today, unholy and undivine as the Tower of Babel, seems to have incurred the wrath of a mighty godhead, and those who were at work upon it have abandoned it to it fate and have scattered apart, all speaking different tongues, and filled with confusion …

Not only does everyone arrogate to himself the right to utter his word upon art, but art's throne is now claimed by thousands upon thousands of usurpers, each of whom has a 'free personality' which he insists upon expressing, and to whom severe law and order would be an insuperable barrier. Exaggerated individualism and anarchy are the result. But such results are everywhere inevitable when all aesthetic canons have been abolished and when there is no longer anybody strong enough to command or to lead. (*Nietzsche and Art*, pp. 7–9)

We do not require to be told that in religion and moral matters scarcely any two specialists are agreed: the extraordinarily large number of religious sects in England alone needs but to be mentioned here; in law we divine that things are in a bad state; in politics even our eyes are beginning to give us evidence of the serious uncertainty prevailing; while in architecture and music the case is pitiable. (*Nietzsche and Art*, p. 10)

Turning now to painting and sculpture, what is it precisely that we see? In this branch of art, chaos and anarchy are scarcely the words to use. The condition is rather one of complete and hopeless dissolution. There is neither a direction, a goal nor a purpose. Slavish realism side by side with crude conventions, incompetence side by side with wasted talent, coloured photography side by side with deliberate eccentricity, and scientific principles applied to things that do not matter in the least—these are a few of the features which are noticeable at a first glance. Going a little deeper, we find that the whole concept of what art really is seems to be totally lacking in the work of modern painters and sculptors, and, if we were forced to formulate a broad definition for the painting and sculpture of our time, we should find ourselves compelled to say that they are no more than

a field in which more or less interesting people manifest their more or less interesting personalities …

One will ask not why do these men paint or mould as they do, but why do they paint or mould at all?

Ugliness, in the sense of amorphousness, one will be able to explain. Ugliness in this sense, although its position in art has not yet been properly accounted for, one will be able to classify perfectly well. But this tremulousness, this plebeian embarrassment, this democratic desire to please; above all, this democratic disinclination to assume a position of authority—these are things which contradict the very essence of art, and these are the things which are found in the productions of almost every European school today. (*Nietzsche and Art*, pp. 15–17)

Nietzsche recognised that this age is one in which will is not merely diseased but almost paralysed. Everywhere he saw men and women, youths and girls, who are unable to resist a stimulus, however slight; who react with excessive speed in the presence of an irritant, and who bedeck this weakness and this irritability with all the finest gala dresses and disguises they can lay their hands on …

There can be no doubt that this irritability does exist, and that it causes large numbers of unrefined and undesirable men and women to enter the arts today who are absolutely mistaken in their diagnosis of their condition. We are all only too ready to conceal our defects beneath euphemistic interpretations of them, and we most decidedly prefer, if we have the choice, to regard any morbid symptoms we may reveal as the sign of strength rather than of weakness. There is some temptation, therefore, both for our friends and ourselves to interpret our natures kindly and if possible flatteringly, and, if we suffer from a certain sickly irritability and sensitiveness in the presence of what we think beautiful, we prefer to ascribe this to an artistic temperament rather than to a debilitated will …

We know the art student who, the moment he sees what he would call ‘a glorious view’ or ‘a dramatic sunset or sunrise’, hurls his materials together helter-skelter and dashes off, *ventre à terre*,[34] to the most convenient spot whence he can paint it. We have seen him seize the thing he calls an impression, his teeth clenched the while and his nostrils dilated. But how often does it occur to us that such a creature has got a bad temper? How often do we realize that he is irritable, self-indulgent, sick in fact?

Only in an age like our own could this ridiculous travesty of an artist pass for an artist. It is only in our age that his neurotic touchiness could possibly be mistaken for strength and vigour, and yet there are hundreds of his kind among the painters and sculptors of the day. (*Nietzsche and Art,* pp. 37–9)

We shall find that the one definite and unswerving tendency of the traditional thought of Europe has been, first, to establish on earth that equality between men which from the outset Christianity has promised them in heaven; secondly, to assail the prestige of man by proving that other tenet of the faith which maintains the general depravity of human nature; and thirdly, to insist upon truth in the Christian sense—that is, as an absolute thing which can be, and must be, made common to all.

At the root of all our science, all our philosophy and all our literature the three fundamental doctrines of Christianity—the equality of all souls, the insuperable depravity of human nature and the insistence upon truth—are the ruling influences. By means of the first and third doctrines equality was established in the spirit, and by means of the second it was established in the flesh.

By means of the first, each individual, great or small, was granted an importance undreamt of theretofore, while the lowest were raised to the highest power; by means of the second, in which the pride of mankind received a snub at once severe and merciless, the highest were reduced to the level of the low, while the low were by implication materially raised; and by means of the third, no truth or point of view which could not be made general could be considered as a truth or a point of view at all …

But in each case, as I have pointed out, it was the higher men who suffered. Because they alone had something to lose. The first notion, that of equality, threatened at once to make them doubt their own privileges and powers, to throw suspicion into the hearts of their followers, and to make all special, exceptional and isolated claims utterly void. The third, the insistence upon a truth which could be general and absolute, denied their right to establish their own truths in the hearts of men and to rise above the most general truth which was reality; while in the second, the Semitic doctrine of general sin, which held that man was not only an imperfect but also a fallen being, and that all his kind shared in this shame, there was not alone the ring of an absence of rank but also of a universal depreciation of human nature, which was ultimately to lead by gradual stages from a

disbelief in man himself to a disbelief in nobles, in kings and finally in gods.

At one stroke, not one or two actions but all human performances, inspirations and happy thoughts had been stripped of their glory and condemned. Man could raise himself only by God's grace—that is to say, by a miracle; otherwise he was but a fallen angel, aimlessly beating the air with his broken wings.

These three blows levelled at the head of higher men were fatal to the artist, for it is precisely in the value of human aspirations, in the efficiency of human creativeness and in the irresistible power of human will that he, above all, must and does believe. It is his mission to demand obedience and to procure reverence, for, as we shall see, every artist worthy of the name is at heart a despot.

Fortunately, the Holy Catholic Church intervened, and by its rigorous discipline and its firm establishment upon a hierarchical principle suppressed for a while the overweening temper of the Christian soul and all claims of individual thought and judgement, while it also recognized an order of rank among men. But the three doctrines above described remained notwithstanding at the core of the Christian faith, and awaited only a favourable opportunity to burst forth and blight all the good that the Church had done.

This favourable opportunity occurred in the person of Martin Luther. The Reformation, in addition to reinstating with all their evil consequences the three doctrines mentioned above, also produced a certain contempt for lofty things and an importunate individualism which has done naught but increase and spread from that day to this.

Individualism on a large scale, of course, had been both tolerated and practised in Gothic architecture, and on this account the buildings of the Middle Ages might be said to breathe a more truly Christian spirit than most of the sculpture and the painting of the same period, which are more hieratic. But it was not until the Reformation began to spread that the most tiresome form of individualism, which we shall call amateurism, received, as it were, a divine sanction, and there can be no doubt that not only art, but all forces which aim at order, law and discipline, will eventually have to wage their most determined and most implacable warfare. (*Nietzsche and Art*, pp. 43–7)

If, in the Europe and especially in the England of today, everybody has a right to every judgement and to every joy; if a certain slavish truthfulness to Nature and reality, rawness and ruggedness, have well-nigh wrecked higher aspirations, and if everybody can press his paltry modicum of voice, of thought, of draughtsmanship, of passion and impudence to the fore, and thus spread his portion of mediocrity like dodder over the sacred field of art, it is because the fundamental principles of the Christian faith are no longer latent or suppressed in our midst but active and potent, if not almighty. (*Nietzsche and Art*, p. 51)

We live in a democratic age. It is only natural, therefore, that all that belongs to the ruler should have been whittled down, diluted and despoiled of its dignity, and we must feel no surprise at finding that no pains have been spared which might reduce art also to a function that would be compatible with the spirit of the times. All that savours of authority has become the work of committees, assemblies, herds, crowds and mobs. How could the word of one man be considered authoritative now that the ruling principle, to use a phrase of Mr Chesterton's, is that 'twelve men are better than one'?

The conception of art as a manifestation of the artist's will to power, and his determination to prevail, is a much too dangerous one for the present day. It involves all kinds of things which are antagonistic to democratic theory, such as command, reverence, despotism, obedience, greatness and inequality. Therefore, if artists are to be tolerated at all, they must have a much more modest, humble and pusillanimous comprehension of what their existence means and of the purpose and aim of their work, and their claims, if they make any, must be meek, unprivileged, harmless and unassuming.

While therefore the artist, as Nietzsche understood him, scarcely exists at all today, another breed of man has come to the fore in the graphic arts, whose very weakness is his passport, who makes no claims at establishing new values of beauty and who contents himself modestly with exhibiting certain baffling dexterities, virtuosities and tricks which at once amaze and delight ordinary spectators or art students, simply because they themselves have not yet overcome even the difficulties of a technique.

Monet's pointillism, Sargent's visible and nervous brush strokes, Rodin's wealth of anatomical detail, the Impressionist's scientific rendering of atmosphere … and the touching devotion of all modern artists to truth, in

the Christian and scientific sense, are all indications of the general funk, the universal paralysis of will, that has overtaken the art world. (*Nietzsche and Art*, pp. 98–100)

For some time now a certain school of artists has been inviting the public to accept, as authentic products of the plastic and graphic arts, works which depart so sharply from what centuries of tradition have accustomed it to regard as such that the bewilderment, let alone the repulsion, it feels can have failed to be pushed to the extreme of a loud protest only because in matters aesthetic either too much modesty or too much snobbery prevents a secret sense of outrage from reaching expression. The modest among the public, hearing the merits of such works trumpeted by cliques of champions and critics assumed to be responsible and expert, hold their peace. They disapprove, but are inclined to ask themselves, ‘After all, what do I know about it? Who am I to object?’. The snobs, on the other hand, dreading to appear reactionary or lowbrow, stifle their instinctive repugnance and feign the admiration that seems to be authoritatively enjoined. As, moreover, no art canons exist, and most modern art criticism is little more than sophisticated verbiage resting on no accepted rules and principles, the average man is left to resign himself disconsolately to yet one further unwelcome innovation. Yet if the modest would but trust their feelings to the point when their diffidence would be overcome, and if the snobs would only take courage and be more sincere, both parties would be astonished to find how right their smothered misgivings about this new art have been all along, and, united, would join in a chorus of condemnation. It is not enough for a great artist like Sir Alfred Munnings publicly to arraign this pseudo-art and question its validity. For, although his distinguished achievements lend impressive weight to his artistic judgements and his vehemence finds a grateful echo in our breast, he offers us no incontrovertible principles to vindicate our secret feelings and give us the right to trust him. Nor can the average man be expected to know how the confusion arose which now seems to justify all these art products that bewilder him. If he knew their genesis, however, he could perhaps identify the moment in recent history when the first fundamental blunder was made, which by degrees grew into the heterodox doctrines on which these perplexing art products are based. For it is all recent history, and the scene opens in France not much earlier than 1860.

At that time the Academy, the official school of art, was bankrupt and exhausted. With its stuffy studio atmosphere and lighting, its artificial effects, its cardboard classicism, and ‘subject’ pictures and sculptures, it had degenerated into a company of tradesmen purveying oleographs and polished drawing-room pedestal statuettes for the least tasteful art patrons in the population. It had become, as Jacques said, a society of mere ‘illustrators’. Against the Academy were arrayed all the malcontents consisting of the *refusés,* and these were by no means only incompetents smarting under the humiliation of having had their works rejected. Many of them were more richly endowed. They thought they knew the sickness that had overtaken the Academy and how it could be cured, and stood for many things the Academy scorned or had not thought of: light, air, life, a reformed palette, and new ways of seeing and recording what was seen. They were the first Impressionists and the forebears of even the least comprehensible forms of modern art.

The opportunity to effect desirable reforms was obviously favourable, for the classic convention of the Academicians had certainly lost touch with life and they included many time-serving mercenaries destitute of genius. These men would have acquired a new vitality, an improved graphic and plastic rhetoric by adopting some of their adversaries’ teaching. They were undoubtedly studio-bound and their newest works were already second-hand in their remoteness from Nature. But to effect a cure it was essential that the diagnosis should be correct, and here the Impressionists made their first blunder. In their ardour to expose and overcome the evils of the Academy school, they mistook a symptom for a cause. They imagined that the shortcomings of the Academicians’ technique were the sole root of the trouble, and thus, insensibly, they ended by making fetishes of what they accused the Academicians of lacking. The means whereby they proposed to reform Academic methods, they proclaimed as ends. In their enthusiasms, they forgot that to banish blacks, browns and umbers from the painter’s palette, to induce him to grant importance to light and atmosphere, and to convince him that arrangement, composition and colour schemes were the major, if not the only, interest in a picture, could neither improve inspiration nor create artistic passion where both were defective. Whistler was probably right when he said that a picture should look as far behind its frame as the scene it depicted was distant from the painter. But this, like

many other new rules, was no cure for the impoverished gifts of the Academicians and many of their contemporaries outside the Academy.

All such innovations could do was to give the artist, good or bad, the technical equipment to be more arresting and convincing than theretofore, better able to pass on to the beholder at least some of the vital spark received by his closer touch with Nature. But such were the freshness and vigour which the new technique imparted to the works of even the least gifted of the Impressionists' camp-followers, many of whom could not have vied with the Academician, Ingres, in technical mastery of the old style, that gradually there grew up a faith, a fanaticism, in connection with technical changes alone, which superseded all other considerations. There can be little doubt that these changes were fondly expected to regenerate art overnight, whether the human material to hand were or were not more gifted than that which had produced the Academicians of the classic convention, or whether or not our present world, life, faith in life and the love of humanity still had the potency to procure adequate inspiration for the artist. Competence in the new technique thus became the measure of artistic merit, and this was the supreme blunder. Even Camille Mauclair, most friendly to the Impressionists, admits this, 'Impressionism', he says, 'being beyond all a technical reaction' … We shall now see how this initial blunder led to the plastic and graphic aberrations that now baffle the common man and which, in his heart of hearts, he suspects of being bogus.

When Manet said, 'le personnage principal dans un tableau c'est la lumière',[35] and Whistler argued that arrangement, composition, harmony and the colour scheme of a picture constitute its chief interest and 'the subject does not matter', neither knew how dangerously his feet were already dangling above Nature and Mother Earth, those very anchorages for art which, strange to say, their school had charged the Academicians with forsaking. In the noise and dust of the battle they failed to grasp the precarious logic of their tenets. For if the principal figure in a picture were the light, and the only essential features were those Whistler suggested, how could the adventitious coruscations of the kaleidoscope, the arbitrary pattern of a shawl or a carpet, be proscribed from the graphic arts? Can we wonder that these reckless fiats too soon opened the way to the extravagances of Post-Impressionism, Cubism, Futurism and the defiant obscurities of the abstract school of painting?

One or two of the saner men of a slightly later period, painters like Gauguin and Van Gogh, the sculptor Rodin and the author Émile Zola, vaguely, it is true, but with sound instinct, saw the fallacy in this concentration on purely technical considerations, and particularly in the banishment of the subject from the role of the legitimate *primum mobile* of an artistic performance. In a letter to Charles Morice in April 1903, Gauguin had said: 'Nous venons de subir en art une très grande période d'égarement … Les artistes ayant perdu tout de leur sauvagerie, n'ayant plus d'instinct, on pourrait dire d'imagination, se sont égarés dans tous les sentiers pour trouver des éléments producteurs qu'ils n'avaient pas la force de créer' …[36] This hit the nail on the head but it still dodged the important issue of the role of the subject, although we may perhaps feel that by implication it deplores the banishment of this role from the process of artistic inspiration. Zola, with his robust realism, had long before 1903 supplied the clue to the solution of the problem when, in 1866, he had said, 'Une œuvre d'art est un coin de la création vu à travers un tempérament'[37] … He here describes the first essential stage in every artistic inspiration. 'A part of Creation' as seen through an artist's temperament is indeed the detonator of the whole concatenation of events culminating in the completed work of art and giving it its validity. Besides being the instigating factor in the production, it is the ultimate reference by which the quality of the artist's interpretation may be measured. We shall see how a shrewd Indian aesthete used this fact to expose the Whistlerian heresy.

One Post-Impressionist of genius, Van Gogh, actually disclosed the form which he wished this 'part of Creation' to take if it was to inspire him. 'I want', he said, 'to paint humanity, humanity and again humanity … I love nothing better than this series of bipeds, from the smallest baby in long clothes to Socrates, from the woman with black hair and white skin to the one with golden hair and a brick-red sunburnt face' … But the new school's leading representatives, as we have seen, exalted arrangement, pattern, composition, light, and colour scheme as the first essentials of a picture, and declared that 'the subject did not matter'. It is true that in most cases—with Manet invariably and with Whistler often—they were fortunately better than their doctrine. But it was their doctrine that their followers took to heart and carried to its logical conclusions, with the result that pictures soon began to appear which were nothing more than arrangements, compositions, colour schemes—patches differently coloured, hieroglyphs made up of

arbitrary forms—conveying no message or meaning, and for which no ultimate reference existed. In fact, in the hands of these least gifted and least inspired epigones of the Impressionists, a work of art became not ‘a part of Creation as seen through an artist’s temperament’ but rather ‘a part of an artist’s temperament’.

And here we have the gravamen of the charge against the Whistlerian heresy: it gave a permanent licence to subjectivity in art. Henceforward the artist, if a painter, could satisfy all the demands of his vocation if his hieroglyph had meaning for himself alone. Worse still, since all means of reference were no longer expected, he could at once conceal and parade his technical incompetence (if he were incompetent) without any chance of being detected. If he happened to be a poet, he could go about chanting ‘abracadabra’ and claim that, because it was perfectly comprehensible to himself, it was impertinent to ask what it meant. Thus subjectivity and charlatanry were given *carte blanche*. There were of course protests, but none was radical enough to expose the cardinal root of the mischief. Even a very good one … only goes as far as to state ‘the most obvious’ of the objections: namely, that in this form of art ‘the interest of an abstract picture is exclusively decorative; since it is not an image, since its forms and colours represent nothing but themselves, it can have no independent pictorial quality. It might supply an admirable motif for a carpet or a wallpaper’. All this is true, but the writer could greatly have strengthened his argument and made it conclusive had he summoned to his side the shrewdest critics of the heresy he attacked.

The sanest observations on this question we owe to the distinguished Indian aesthete Dr Ananda Coomaraswamy, who in 1943 said: ‘The fundamental judgement [of a work of art] is the degree of the artist’s success in giving clear expression to the theme of his work. In order to answer the question, “Has the thing been well said?”, it will evidently be necessary for us to know what it was that was to be said. It is for this reason that in every discussion on works of art we must begin with the subject-matter’ … Equally magisterial and useful is Dr P.R. Ballard’s criticism of the Whistlerian heresy.

Commenting on the hackneyed tag, ‘Verisimilitude is not art’, which is only a variation of Whistler’s unfortunate dictum, he says: ‘And yet verisimilitude cannot be wholly ignored. For art is not merely expression, it is also communication; and communication is only possible through a series

of symbols which have virtually the same meaning to the parties concerned, the communicator and the communicatee … Appearances are the words of [the graphic artist's] language' … The two above statements surely give us the most satisfying refutation of the doctrines which, after 1860 in France and elsewhere, by their exaltation of technical reforms alone, and more particularly by their ill-considered dismissal of 'the subject' in measuring the merits of a work of art, inevitably, but for the most part unwittingly, paved the way for the gross abuses now marring much of latter-day production in both painting and sculpture. ('Confusion in the arts', pp. 106–10)

High Art

If the artist's view of life can no longer affect life; if his ordering, simplifying and adjusting mind can no longer make life simpler, more orderly and better adjusted, then all his power has vanished and he has ceased from counting in our midst, save perhaps as a decorator of our homes—that is to say, as an artisan—or as an entertainer—that is to say, as a mere illustrator of our literary men's work.

What is so important in the artist is that disorder and confusion are the lodestones that attract him. Though in stating this I should ask you to remember that he sees disorder and confusion where very often the ordinary person imagines everything to be admirably arranged. Still, the fact remains that he finds his greatest proof of power only where his ordering and simplifying mind meets with something whereon it may stamp its two strongest features—order and simplicity—and where he is strong, relative disorder is his element, and the arrangement of this disorder is his product. Stimulated by disorder, which he despises, he is driven to his work; spurred by the sight of anarchy, his inspiration is government; fertilized by rudeness and ruggedness, his will to power gives birth to culture and refinement. He gives of himself: his business is to make things reflect him. (*Nietzsche and Art*, pp. 117–18)

It follows from this, therefore, that the realistic artist … who goes direct to beauty or ugliness and, after having worked upon either, leaves it just as it was before, shows no proof of power at all and ranks with the Bushmen of Australia and the troglodytes of La Dordogne as very much below the hierophantic artist who transforms and transfigures. All realists, therefore, from Apelles in the fourth century BC to the modern Impressionists,

portrait-painters and landscapists, must step down. Like the scientists, they merely ascertain facts, and in so doing leave things precisely as they are. Photography is rapidly outstripping them and will outstrip them altogether once it has mastered the problem of colour. Photography could never have vied with the artist of Egypt, or even of China and Japan, because in the arts of each of these nations there is an element of human power over Nature or reality which no mechanical process can emulate. (*Nietzsche and Art*, p. 119)

[T]hough artists as a rule are men of strong propensities and surplus energy, there is an instinct of chastity in the best of them which impels them to devote all their power to prevailing in concepts rather than in offspring, and which makes them avoid precisely that quarter whither other men turn when they wish to prevail …

There is no greater delight or passionate love on earth for the artist than this: to feel that he has stamped his hand on a people and on a millennium, to feel that his eyes, his ears and his touch have become their eyes and their ears and their touch. There is no deeper enjoyment than this for him: to feel that, as he sees, hears and feels, they also will be compelled to see, hear and feel. Only thus is he able to prevail. A people becomes his offspring. (*Nietzsche and Art*, pp. 87–8)

The ruler-artist is he who, elated by his own health and love of life, says ‘yea’ to his own type and proclaims his faith or confidence in it against all other types, and who, in so doing, determines or accentuates the values of that type …

All great ruler-art, then, is, as it were, a song of praise, a Magnificat appealing only to those and pleasing only those who feel in sympathy with the values which it advocates. And that is why all art of any importance and of any worth must be based upon a certain group of values—in other words, must have a philosophy or a particular view of the world as its foundation. Otherwise it is pointless, meaningless and divorced from life. Otherwise it is acting, sentimental nonsense or *l’art pour l’art*.

All great ruler-art also takes man as its content because human values are the only values that concern it. All great ruler-art also takes beauty within a certain people as its aim because the will to power is its driving instinct, and beauty, being the most difficult thing to achieve, is the strongest test of

power. Finally, all great ruler-art is optimistic because it implies the will of the artist to prevail.

But what constitutes the form of the ruler-artist's work? In what way must he give us his content?

The ruler-artist's form is the form of the commander. It must scorn to please. It must brook no disobedience and no insubordination, save among those of its beholders about whom it does not care, from whom it would fain separate itself and among whom it is not with its peers. It must be authoritative, extremely simple, irrefutable, full of restraint and as repetitive as a Mohammedan prayer. It must point to essentials, it must select essentials and it must transfigure essentials. The presence of non-essentials in a work of art is sufficient to put it at once upon a very low plane. For what matters above all is that the ruler-artist should prevail in concepts, and in order to do this his work must contain the definite statement of the value he sets upon all that he most cherishes

Hence the belief all through the history of the aesthetic that high art is a certain unity in variety, a certain single idea exhaled from a more or less complex whole or, as the Japanese say, 'repetition with a modicum of variation'.

Symmetry, as denoting balance and as a help to obtaining a complete grasp of an idea; *sobriety*, as proving the power of the great mind that has overcome the chaos in itself to reflect its order and harmony upon other things and to select the most essential features from among a host of more or less essential features; *transfiguration*, as betraying that Dionysian elation and elevation from which the artist gives of himself to reality and makes it reflect his own glory back upon him; *repetition*, as a means of obtaining obedience; and *variety*, as the indispensable condition of all living art, all art which is not hortatory and which does not aim at repose alone, at sleep and at soothing and lulling jaded and exasperated nerves—these are the principal qualities of ruler-art, and any work which would be deficient in one of these qualities would thereby be utterly and deservedly condemned to take its place on a lower plane.

Perhaps the greatest test of all, however, in regard to the worth of an artistic production is to inquire when it came, what was its source. Has hunger or superabundance created it?

If the first, the work will make nobody richer. It will rather rob them of what they have. It is likely to be either (a) true to Nature, (b) uglier than Nature or (c) absurdly unnatural. (a) is the product of the ordinary man, (b) is the product of the man below mediocrity, save in a certain manual dexterity, and (c) is the outcome of the tyrannical will of the sufferer, who wishes to wreak his revenge on all that thrives and is beautiful and happy and which bids him weave fantastic worlds of his own, away from this one, where people of his calibre can forget their wretched ailments and evil humours and wallow in their own feverish nightmares of overstrained, palpitating and neuropathic yearnings. (a) is poverty-realism … (b) is pessimism and incompetent art. (c) is Romanticism.

Where superabundance is active, the work is the gift and the blessing of the will to power of some higher man. It will seem as much above Nature to mediocre people as its creator is above them. But, since it will brook no contradiction, it will actually value Nature afresh and stimulate them to share in this new valuation.

Where poverty is active, the work is an act of robbery. It is what psychologists call a reflex action resulting from a stimulus, the only kind of action that we understand nowadays …

The art which must have experience and which is not the outcome of inner riches brought to the surface by meditation—this is the art of poverty.

The general modern belief in experience and in the necessity of furnishing the mind by going direct to Nature and to reality shows to what extent the art of today has become reactive instead of active.

The greater part of modern realism is the outcome of this poverty. It is reactive art, resulting from reflex actions, and as such is an exceedingly unhealthy sign. Not only does it show that the power of resisting stimuli is waning or altogether absent, but it also denotes that inner power which requires no stimulus to discharge itself is either lacking or exceedingly weak. (*Nietzsche and Art,* pp. 137–44)

No creator can tolerate the past, save as a thing which once served as his schooling. But a people are usually one with their past. To them it is at once a grandfather, a father and an elder brother. In a trice the creator deprives them of these relatives. Through him they are made orphans, brotherless and alone. Hence the pain that is inevitably associated with the joy of destruction and of creation …

For a robust and rich people scorn to treasure and to hoard that which has gone before. And thus our museums alone are perhaps the greatest betrayal of our times.

When the Athenians returned to their ruined Acropolis in the first half of the fifth century before Christ, they did not even scratch the ground to recover the masterpieces that lay broken, though not completely destroyed, all around them. And, as Professor Gardner observes, it is fortunate for us that no mortar was required for the buildings which were being erected to take the place of those that had been destroyed, otherwise these fragments of marble sculpture and architecture, instead of being buried to help in filling up the terraced area of the Acropolis, would certainly have gone to the lime-kiln.

The men of the Renaissance, in the same way, regarded the buildings of ancient Rome merely as so many quarries whence they might bear away the materials for their own constructions. And whether Paul II wished to build the Palazzo di Venezia, or Cardinal Riario the Cancellaria, the same principle obtained. At the same period we also find Raphael destroying the work of earlier painters by covering it with his own compositions, and Michelangelo not hesitating to obliterate even Perugino's altar frescoes in the Sistine Chapel in order to paint his *Judgement*. While in comparatively recent times, at a moment when a great future seemed to be promised to modern Egypt, Mehmet Ali sent his architect to the sacred Pyramids of Giza to rob them of the alabaster which he required for his magnificent mosque on the citadel of Cairo.

From a purely archaeological and scholastic point of view, therefore, it is possible to justify our museums; the British Museum, for instance. But from the creative or artistic standpoint, they are simply a confession of impotence, of poverty and of fear, and as such are utterly contemptible. (*Nietzsche and Art,* pp. 148–50)

When one now adds to these influences the steady rise of the power of the bourgeoisie in Europe from the seventeenth century onward and, as a result of this increasing power, an uninterrupted growth in the art of portrait-painting—a growth that attained such vast proportions that it cast all attainments of a like nature in any other age or continent into the shade—one can easily understand what factors have been the most formidable opponents of ruler-art in the Occident since the events of the Renaissance.

After all that I have said concerning the principles of ruler-art, it will scarcely be necessary for me to expatiate upon those elements in portrait-painting which are antagonistic to these principles, for, when you think of portrait-painting as it has been developed by the claims of the bourgeoisie in Europe, you must not have Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa* in mind. Neither must you consider that portrait-work in which by chance the artist has had before him a model who, in every feature of face or of figure, corresponded to his ideal, nor that in which the artist has been able to allow himself to exercise his simplifying and transfiguring power. Otherwise some of the best of Rubens's and Rembrandt's work would of necessity come under the ban which we must set upon by far the greater number of portraits …

This, then, is not the class of portrait-work which need necessarily deteriorate the power of art. What does deteriorate this power is that other and more common class of portrait-painting, which began in Holland in the seventeenth century and in which each sitter insisted upon discovering all his little characteristics and individual peculiarities; in which, as Muther says, each sitter wished to find 'a counterfeit of his personality' and in which 'no artistic effect, but resemblance alone, was the object desired'.

It was the insistence upon this kind of portrait-work by the wealthy bourgeoisie of England which well-nigh drove Whistler, with his ruler spirit, out of his mind, and it is precisely this portrait-work which is dominant today. In order to be pleasing and satisfactory to the people who demand it, this class of painting presupposes the suppression of all those first principles upon which ruler-art relies in order to flourish and to soar, and, where it is seriously and earnestly pursued, art is bound to suffer. (*Nietzsche and Art*, pp. 165–7)

How can we admire and understand even the symbol of King Khefren's social organization, the pyramid, when we know and love only the level plain?

The pyramid, which in its form embodies all the highest qualities of great art and all the highest principles of a healthy society, is the greatest artistic achievement that has been discovered hitherto.

This symbolic wedlock of art and sociology still stands, with all its six thousand years of age, on the threshold of the desert—that is to say, on the threshold of chaos and disorder, where none but the wind attempts to shape

and to form—and reminds us of a master will that once existed and set its eternal stamp upon the face of the world in Egypt, so that posterity might learn whether mankind had risen or declined.

In its synthesis of the three main canons—simplicity, repetition and variety—nothing has ever excelled it; in its mystic utterance of the conditions of the ideal state, in which every member takes his place and ultimately succeeds in holding highest man uppermost and nearest the sun, it is unparalleled in history; and in its sacred revelation that man can attain to some height if he chooses, that he can believe in man the god, and man the hierophant, and man the prophet, if he chooses, and that he can be noble, happy, lasting and powerful in so doing—in this treble advocacy of these sublime ideals, the pyramid and the Egyptians who created it stand absolutely alone in the history of the world.

The best in Greece was borrowed from them; the best we still possess is perhaps but a faint afterglow of their setting sun, and the cold and unfamiliar tone in which their art seems to appeal to modern men ought to prove to us how remote, how incalculably far off, they are from our insignificant age of progress and advancement, of feebleness and mediocrity and of hopeless errors, in which ‘the prince proposes, but the shopkeeper disposes’ …

Only a romantic idealist would have the sentimental fanaticism to … preach an Egyptian renaissance. I wish to do nothing of the sort. I know too well to what an extent the art of Egypt was the product of a people reared by a definite set of inviolable values to hope to transplant it with any chance of success on to our democratic and anarchical soil. What I do wish to advocate, however, is that when you think of the best in art your mind should go back to the severe and vigorous culture of Egypt and not to that of any other country. (*Nietzsche and Art,* pp. 232–5)

Rodin

Briefly stated, the evolution of sculpture from the ancient Egyptians via the Greeks to our own time has revealed, except for periods of decline, an ever-increasing fluidity and nervousness of form. Taking the human body as the principal vehicle of expression in the sculptor’s art, what we see in the history of sculpture from Egypt 4000 BC to Paris AD 1900 is a progressive looseness and flaccidness in the body and its pose, accompanied by increasing movement. As the periods go by, rigidity and perhaps vigour

gradually diminish, until with Donatello a more delicate and supple form is attained. It is as if Christian civilization had multiplied and rarefied the gifts of the artist, just as it has complicated and rarefied the soul of humanity, and enabled man as a whole to see certain things more sympathetically and less simply. (*Personal Reminiscences of Auguste Rodin*, p. 145)

The quality known as ‘repose’ in the ancient Greek is a manifestation of that serenity which belongs to a people not yet disturbed by self-doubt, self-immolation and self-contempt. It is the extreme harmony of a mentality not yet shaken by the tortures of introspection or inner conflict, by what Goethe called ‘two souls throning within one bosom’. The beauty of the Greeks is the beauty of men who have never in their wildest dreams beheld the horrors of Dante’s Inferno. Poorer than the moderns in this respect, they consequently have the bliss which is partly ignorance, and this bliss is revealed in their art. Everything that has appeared in western Europe since the fall of the Roman Empire is certainly less serene, less blissful, more foolish, perhaps, in its wisdom, than was the partial ignorance of the Greeks; but it is more fretful, more nervous, more subterranean and subcutaneous, more full of insight and second sight, and consequently, therefore, more disturbing. (*Personal Reminiscences of Auguste Rodin*, pp. 148–9)

The first thing that the layman requires to understand about sculpture is the fact that the carved or moulded figure, whether of marble or terracotta, has been produced by a process the exact converse of Nature’s. Nature works from within outwards. The seed germinates, expands and produces the tree, the plant or the animal by a process of proliferation, by a sort of invasion of space, a sort of shouldering of a form into the external light, a cleaving of the air right and left by energy assuming tangible being. And natural objects retain throughout their existence the signs of having grown in this way. Now, this is most significant and it is a fact which, recognized by Rodin, taught him where the pitfalls in sculpture lay.

For what is sculpture? Is it not the production of a form by peripheral processes alone? Is it not therefore the converse of Nature’s method? A man is a conglomeration of cells that have grown and pushed the air aside from an inner necessity. A sculpture of a man, however, is an object which has acquired shape from the outside, from surface treatment, as if by corrugations of its periphery. The natural form retains until the last the signs that it has grown outwards from inner necessity. Is it possible that sculpture,

as representing the converse of the natural mode of formation, will also bear until the last the stamp of having grown from no inner necessity, but of having been pinched into existence, so to speak, from the outside?

Rodin's reply to this question was that all bad and ordinary sculpture retains until the end the signs of having been formed from the outside, rather than of having cleaved the air in expanding. According to Rodin, therefore, the radical problem of all good sculpture consisted in discovering how an object moulded from the outside could be made to look as if it had grown from an inner necessity. In other words, it consisted in so manipulating the medium of expression as to produce by art a form that seemed to be created by natural laws …

Very often Rodin used to say to me that he had been obliged, in order to solve this problem, to discipline himself into regarding all natural objects in a new way, and that it was only when he had succeeded in acquiring the habit of this unusual vision that he had begun to produce living sculpture. This new way consisted in feeling all surfaces and all terminal points, whether in a human or animal model, as the projected limits of certain masses, as the apices of given thicknesses, and not as planes lying lengthwise to the line of vision. 'Look at every part of a given form', he would say, 'as the limit of a thickness rather than a surface in length, and every point in that form as the extremity of a diameter directed at you, rather than as a slope or plane stretching across your line of vision, and you will have grasped my method of seeing when I am modelling'. (*Personal Reminiscences of Auguste Rodin*, pp. 149–52)

Superimposed on the vital first principle so brilliantly understood and conveyed by Rodin, we find in his sculpture also the principle of movement …

Movement in Nature involves progression from one position to another. But sculpture is fixed. Can this radical incompatibility ever be overcome? To seize the last movement made by a living form, which seems to be the only resource of the sculptor and painter, is not to represent movement. Because, if movement is progression from one position to another, to seize any moment in that progression is to represent not movement but rigidity … The sculptor with his marble, his clay, or his bronze seems doomed to represent only immobility because apparently he can seize only one moment in progression and has to give the whole of the anatomical

conditions of that one moment. But if this is so, one of the principal characteristics of life is wholly beyond the reach of the graphic arts, and there is no doubt that a large number of sculptors and painters, having perceived this impasse, have humbly prostrated themselves before it without making any attempt to escape. On the other hand, there are a large number too, who, without investigating thoroughly the principle involved, have evidently overcome the difficulty, as Verrocchio's *Bartolommeo Colleoni* and innumerable other genial sculptures and pictures are with us to prove …

Now, Rodin made a particular study of this problem, and it may be said that it never ceased to preoccupy him … He perceived very soon that any attempt to seize one moment alone in progression was fatal to the illusion of movement. This the camera proved convincingly enough …

Wherein, then, in this matter does the eye differ from the camera? It does so in being able to record without confusion the merging of one movement into another, the blending of one movement in progression with another movement. The eye sees the hind limbs of a horse in a given position, and then travels forward to the animal's forequarters, only to find that they no longer bear to the still vivid image of the hind limbs the proper relation for a possible coordinated natural movement. In this way, two distinct positions become imprinted on the mind as one, with the result that succession of movement is felt as a visible fact, for movement is a succession of positions, each of which is coordinated in itself and no two of which can be fused naturally into one. Two positions therefore conceived as one give the impression of movement even in the static sculpture or the drawn outline. And that is why photographs of moving forms are so unsatisfactory to the spectator, and why conventional and artistic representation of moving forms, which are photographically wrong and which are therefore condemned by inartistic pedants, are ever so much more convincing, both to the initiated and the uninitiated in matters of art; because they convey the impression of movement in the only possible way it can be conveyed in a single image—namely, by the fusing of two naturally distinct positions.

There is no need to point out the obvious truth that if the impression of movement is to be convincing the two uncoordinated positions must not be too glaringly incompatible—that is to say, separated by too great an interval of time, otherwise a look of distortion would be the result. (*Personal Reminiscences of Auguste Rodin*, pp. 155–8)

To [Rodin], artistic creation was a question of technical mastery, far more than many supposed. Like Coquelin [the Elder], he mistrusted moments of so-called ‘inspiration’, with the exalted mood and passionately quivering nostrils of the romantic artist. ‘Inspired moments’, he used to say, ‘by inducing a state akin to intoxication, may make the artist forget the principles on which the interpretation of his idea depends’.

Unlike the romantic artist who, after creating in a moment of passion, returns in a sober moment to his work only to be surprised, Rodin knew that all he did in the form of exaggerated effects, subtle asymmetries or the production of rough excrescences, on his figures or busts, which might suggest haste or fervour, were in reality deliberate. He viewed them as a scientist rather than as a dreamer. (‘Rodin as I knew him’, p. 98)

Van Gogh

Who has not been disappointed on reading Ghiberti’s commentaries, Leonardo’s notebooks, Vasari’s discourses on ‘Technique’, Antoine Raphael Meng’s treatises, Hogarth’s *Analysis of Beauty,* Reynolds’s *Discourses,* Alfred Stevens’s *Aphorisms,* etc.? But who has not felt that he was foredoomed to disappointment in each case? For an artist who could express the ‘why’ and the ‘how’ of his productions in words would scarcely require to wield the chisel or the brush with any special power. The way in which one chooses to express oneself is no accident; it is determined by the very source of one’s artistic passion. A true painter expresses himself best in paint. (‘Introductory essay on Van Gogh and his art’, p. ix)

And now I am going to express … the view that Van Gogh towards the end became quite positive, not only in his attitude towards life itself, but above all in his attitude towards man. After much tribulation, and the gravest and most depressing doubts, he at last realized this fundamental truth, that art, sound art, cannot be an end in itself, that art for art’s sake is simply the maddest form of individualistic isolation—not to use a less sonorous but more drastic term—and that art can find its meaning only in life and in its function as a life-force. The highest art, then, must be the art that seeks its meaning in the highest form of life. What is the highest form of life? Van Gogh replies to this question as emphatically and uncompromisingly as every sane and healthy artist has done in all the sanest and healthiest periods of history. He says ‘man’.

Now, all that he has acquired—art-forms, technique, stored experience, practised observation—is but a means, a formidable equipment, which he is deep enough, artist enough, human enough, to wish to lay at the feet of something higher. Now, his storehouse of knowledge becomes an arsenal which he consecrates solemnly to the service of a higher cause and a higher aim than the mere immortalizing of ‘decorative pages of colour’, ‘interesting and strong colour-schemes’ and ‘exteriorizations of more or less striking impressions’. When these things are pursued as ends in themselves, as they were by the Impressionists and the Whistlerites, they are the signs of poverty, both of instinct and intelligence. They are also signs of the fact that the mere craftsmen, the simple handworkmen or the mere mechanic—in other words, the proletariat of the workshop—[have] been promoted to the rank of artist, and that matters of decoration, technique and treatment (which are fit subjects for carpenters, scene-painters and illustrators to love and to regard as the end of their mediocre lives) have usurped the place of higher and holier lives.

In about as many years as it takes some painters to learn their palette, Van Gogh had learnt the great and depressing truth at the bottom of all the art of his age—the truth that it was bankrupt, impoverished, democratized and futile. Divorced from life, divorced from man and degraded by the great majority of its votaries, art was rapidly becoming the least respected and least respectable of all human functions.

He realized that art was an expression of life itself, that pictorial art was an expression of life’s satisfaction at her passions become incarnate. All expression is self-revelatory. Pictorial art, then, is the self-revelation of life herself looking into her soul and upon her forms. It is life pronouncing her judgement on herself. Alas, it is less than that: it is a certain kind of life pronouncing its judgement on all life. Where life is sick and impoverished, her voice speaking through the inferior man condemns herself and paints herself bloodless and dreary, probably with a sky above depicted in a lurid and mysteriously fascinating fashion, calculated to make the earth seem grey and gloomy in comparison. Where life is sound and exuberant, her voice, speaking through the sound man, extols herself and paints herself in bright, brave colours, which include even bright and brave nuances for pain and the like.

The sound, healthy artist, then, once he attained to proficiency in his *métier*—a result which, if he be really wise and proud, he will not attempt

to accomplish before the public eye as everyone is doing at present—naturally looks about him for that higher thing in life to which he can consecrate his power. His passion is to speak of life itself and life in its highest manifestation, man. But, alas, whither on earth must the poor artist turn today in order to find that type which would be worthy of his love and of his pictorial advocacy?

Is the hotchpotch, democratic, democratized, hard-working, woman-ridden European a subject to inspire such an artist? True, he can turn to the peasant, as many artists, and even Van Gogh himself, did. At least the peasant is a more fragrant and nobler type than the undersized, hunted-rat type of town-man, with his wild eyes that can see only the main chance, with his moist fingertips always feeling their way tremblingly into another's hoard, and with his womenfolk all trying to drown their dissatisfaction with him by an endless round of pleasure and repletion. But surely there is something higher than the peasant, something greater and nobler than the horny-handed son of toil?

Gauguin and Van Gogh knew that there was someone nobler than the peasant. But the tragedy of their existence was that they did not know where to find him.

Fortunately for himself, Van Gogh died on the very eve of this discovery. Gauguin suffered a more bitter fate than death: he went searching the globe for a nobler type than his fellow-Continentals, at whose feet he might lay the wonderful powers that Nature, study and meditation had given him. But in doing this he was only doing what the whole of Europe will soon be doing. The parallel is an exact one. The prophecy of the artist will be seen to have been true. And Gauguin's search for a better type of humanity is only one proof the more, if such were needed, of the intimate relationship of art to life, and of the miraculous regularity with which art is always the first to indicate the direction life is taking. ('Introductory essay on Van Gogh and his art', pp. xxxiii–xxxvi)

The Human Form

In the first place … let me pronounce this fundamental principle, as far as I personally am concerned: that there is no beauty, no mastery and no excellence which cannot in the end be interpreted in the terms of humanity. There is no such thing as beauty *per se*, mastery *per se* and excellence *per se*. All these qualities can ultimately be traced to man and to man's emotion,

and without man I maintain that such qualities would cease to exist on earth.

A beautiful poem is one that can be linked up rapidly or by degrees, consciously or unconsciously, with things which are desirable in humanity or in a certain kind or part of humanity. The poem that praises pity in rhythmic cadence, for instance, will charm the Christian of the twentieth century; for him, pity is a desirable attribute of the modern human creature, and rhythm is a convincing and commanding art-form in which to cast a desirable thought. On the other hand, it would either revolt the pagan or leave him indifferent, while he might regard it as a sacrilegious act to squander such a precious art-form as rhyming verses upon so futile a subject.

All beauty, then, in the end, is human beauty, all ugliness is human ugliness. No healthy people of the world have ever considered youth (I do not mean infancy) in any manifestation of Nature as ugly, because youth is the sure promise of human life and of a multiplication of human life. On the other hand, no healthy people have ever considered ulcers, gangrenous limbs or decay in any form as beautiful, because ulceration, gangrene and decay are the end of human life and the reduction of it. It is true that the ‘beautiful consumptive’, the ‘love of consumptives’, the ‘captivating cripple’ are notions which can be found in Bulwer-Lytton and George Eliot, not to speak of a host of minor English writers. But, then, let us remember from what part of the world they hail—from the most absurdly sentimental, over-Christianized and over-puritanized country on earth, England. But the whole of northwestern Europe is now quite able to vie with England in this sort of nonsense, otherwise the Eugenics Society, which ought to be superfluous, would not require to be so active. (‘Introductory essay on Van Gogh and his art’, pp. xxix–xxx)

The purpose of man is a thousand times more important than the purpose of art. The one determines the other. And as a proof of how intimately the two are connected, see how much doubt there is as to the purpose of art, precisely at a moment when men also, owing to the terrible civil war which is raging among their values, are beginning to doubt the real purpose of human existence …

Our first duty, then, is not to mend the arts: you cannot mend a cripple. But it is rather to mend the parents who bring forth this cripple—to mend

life itself, and above all man. (*Nietzsche and Art*, pp. 169–70)

We are aware that in the majority of cases all the noise of this art revolution has been concentrated around questions of technique. The purpose of art was tacitly assumed to be to obtain as faithful a transcript as possible of Nature and of reality, pure and simple—not Nature linked up with a higher idea, or reality bathed in the atmosphere of a love that transcended mere actualities—but simply Nature and reality as they were felt by anybody and everybody. And the milestones along the highway covered by this revolutionary band do not mark the acquisition of new passions or new loves, but rather the adoption of new technical methods and mannerisms for accomplishing this transcript in ever more perfect and more scientific ways. Nature, with its light and atmospheric effects, roused men like Manet and his friends to heroic deeds of determination. Peasants, ‘innocent’ and ‘unsophisticated’, seemingly belonging to Nature and not to town or ‘artificial’ life, were included in the category Nature, from which it was legitimate to make a transcript. Café scenes, scenes of town life, glimpses ‘behind the scenes’ were included in the category Reality, provided their ‘artificiality’ and ‘unnaturalness’ were mitigated by a certain ‘character’ of which it was also legitimate to make a transcript. And all this was done, not because the peasant or the scenes from town life were linked up with any higher purpose or any definite scheme of life which happened to fire the hearts of the painters of [the] last century, but because, as a matter of fact, all life-passions, all life-schemes were at an end, and anything was good enough, picturesque enough, trivial enough for these artists (whose general scepticism drove them to technique as the only refuge) to tackle and to try their new technique, their new method or new watchword upon. Light, the play of complementaries, the breaking up of light, the study of values—little things please little minds!

It was these preoccupations that usurped the place of the rapidly vanishing ‘subject’ in pictures. But what was the subject? What part had it played? It is true that the subject picture in Manet’s time was rapidly becoming a mere farce, an empty page filled arbitrarily with any sentiment or mood that happened to be sufficiently puerile or at least sufficiently popular. But it had had a noble past. It had had a royal youth. The subject picture was merely the survival of an age when men had painted with a deep faith. It was the last vestige of an historical period in which men had been inspired to express their relationship to life by something higher and

greater than both themselves and their art. In fact, it had always flourished in periods when humanity had known of a general direction, a general purpose in life and of a scheme in life which gave their heartbeats and their breath some deeper meaning than they have at present.

The degeneration of the subject picture, then, into a mere illustration of some passing event or ephemeral sentiment had a deeper significance than even its bitterest enemies recognized. For while they, as new technicians seeking light and complementaries, deplored the spiritless and uninspired oleographs of their academical contemporaries, they completely overlooked the deeper truth; their artistic instincts were not strong enough to make them see that the spiritless and uninspired subject picture was the most poignant proof of the fact that mankind no longer possessed, to any passionate or intense degree, that which made the subject picture possible—that is to say, a profound faith in something greater and more vital either than the artists themselves or their art, something which gave not only art but also life a meaning and a purpose. (‘Introductory essay on Van Gogh and his art’, pp. xvii–xix)

The term ‘beautiful’, like the term ‘good’, is only a means to an end. It is simply the arbitrary self-affirmation of a certain type of man in his struggle to prevail. He says ‘yea’ to his type and calls it beautiful. He cannot extend his power and overcome other types unless with complete confidence and assurance he says ‘yea’ to his own type.

You and I, therefore, can speak of the beautiful with an understanding of what that term means only on condition that our values, our traditions, our desires and our outlook are exactly the same. If you agree with me on the question of what is good, our agreement simply means this: that, in that corner of the world from which you and I hail, the same creator of values prevails over both of us. Likewise, if you and I agree on the question of what is beautiful, this fact merely denotes that as individuals coming from the same people we have our values, our tradition and our outlook in common.

‘Beautiful’, then, is a purely relative term which may be applied to a host of dissimilar types and which every people must apply to its own type alone, if it wishes to preserve its power. Biologically, absolute beauty exists only within the confines of a particular race. That race which would begin to consider another type than their own as beautiful would thereby cease

from being a race. We may be kind, amiable and even hospitable to the Chinaman or the Negro, but, the moment we begin to share the Chinaman's or the Negro's view of beauty, we run the risk of cutting ourselves adrift from our own people …

It is quite certain, therefore, that in the graphic arts, which either determine or accentuate the values 'ugly' and 'beautiful', every artist who sets up his notion of what is subject-beauty, like every lover about to marry, either assails or confirms and consolidates the values of his people.

Examples of this, if they were needed, are to be found everywhere. See how the Gothic school of painting, together with men like Fra Angelico, Filippo Lippi, Botticelli, El Greco and subsequently Burne-Jones, set up the soulful person, the person of tenuous, nervous and heaven-aspiring slenderness as the type of beauty, thus advocating and establishing Christian values in a very seductive and often artistic manner, while the Pagans, with Michelangelo, Titian and even Rubens, represented another code of values —perhaps even several other codes—and sought to fix their type also.

Note, too, how hopeless are the attempts of artists who stand for the Pagan ideal when they paint Christian saints and martyrs, and how singularly un-Pagan those figures are which appear in the pictures of the advocates of the Christian ideal when they attempt Pagan types. Christ by Rubens is not the emaciated, tenuous person suffering from a wasting disease that Segna represents him to be, while the Mars and Venus of Botticelli in the National Gallery would have been repudiated with indignation by any Greek of antiquity.

When values are beginning to get mixed, then, owing to an influx of foreigners from all parts of the world, we shall find the strong biological idea of absolute beauty tending to disappear, and in its place we shall find the weak and wholly philosophical belief arising that beauty is relative. Thus in Attica of the fifth century BC, when 300,000 slaves, chiefly foreigners, were to be counted among the inhabitants, the idea that beauty was a relative term first occurred to the 'talker' Socrates. (*Nietzsche and Art*, pp. 128–31)

Landscape

[M]an is the highest subject of art in general and … the moment humanity ceases from holding the first place in our interest, something must be amiss, either with humanity or with ourselves.

Still, there are degrees and grades among ruler-artists. All of them cannot aspire to the exposition of the highest human values. And just as some turn to design and to ornament, and thus in a small way arrange and introduce order into a small area of the world, so others, standing halfway between these designers and the valuers of humanity, apply their powers quite instinctively to Nature away from man. They have a thought to express—let us say it is ‘order is the highest good’ or ‘power is the source of all pleasure and beauty’ or ‘anarchy contends in vain against the governing power of light which is genius’—and in the case of the last thought they paint a rugged scene which they reveal as arranged, simplified and transfigured by the power of the sun. In each of these cases they use Nature merely as a symbol or a vehicle by means of which their thought or valuation is borne in upon their fellows, and they do not start out as actual admirers of mere scenery, wishing only to repeat it as carefully as possible.

Even when it uses Nature merely as a symbol or a vehicle, however, there can be little doubt that this kind of ruler-art is a degree lower in rank than the art which concerns itself with man, and when this kind of art becomes realistic, as it did with Constable and all his followers, it is literally superfluous. Only when the landscape is a minor element, serving but to receive and convey the mood or aspiration of the artist, is it a subject for ruler-art, and then the hand of man should be visible in it everywhere. With the artist’s arranging, simplifying and transfiguring power observable in Nature, landscape-painting, as Kant very wisely observed in his *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, becomes a process of pictorial gardening and as such can teach very great lessons.

[D]ifficult as it may seem to realize it, there is nothing whatsoever artistically beautiful in landscape. Only sentimental townspeople, compelled by their particular mode of existence to gaze daily on their own hideous homes and streets, ever manifest a senselessly ardent and determined affection for green fields and hills for their own sake, and, with English psychologists, it would be quite admissible here to say that all beauty that particular people believe to exist in country scenery is the outcome of association. The ancients liked the sunlit and fruitful valley because of its promise of sustenance and wealth but they showed no love of Nature as such …

But even among sensible moderns, uninfected by sentimental fever, the love of Nature is mostly of a purely utilitarian kind, as witness the love of

cornfields, hayfields and orchards. The farmer at certain times gazes kindly at the purple hills behind his acres of cultivated land because their colour indicates the coming rain. The cattle-breeder smiles as he surveys the Romney marshes and thinks of the splendid pastureland they would make. (*Nietzsche and Art*, pp. 150–6)

What constitutes the artistic beauty in a painted landscape, then, is the mood, the particular human quality that the artist throws into it. As the French painters say, a landscape is a state of the soul, and unless the particular mood or idea with which the artist invests a natural scene have some value and interest, and be painted in a commanding or ruler manner, it is a mere piece of superfluous foolery, which may, however, find its proper place on a great railway poster or in an estate agent's illustrated catalogue.

There is, on the other hand, another kind of love of Nature, which dates only from the eighteenth century and which is thoroughly and unquestionably contemptible. This also, like the above, is the result of association and has nothing artistic in its constitution, but this time it is an association which is misanthropic and negative. I refer to what is generally known as the love of the romantic in Nature, the love of mountains, torrents, unhandselled copses, virgin woods and rough and uncultivated country.

In this love a new element enters the appreciation of Nature, and that is a dislike and mistrust of everything that bears the stamp of man's power or his labour, and therefore an exaltation of everything untutored, uncultured, free, unconstrained and wild.

This attitude of mind seems to have been unknown not only to the Greeks and Romans but practically to all European nations up to the time of Rousseau. As Friedländer says, it would be difficult to find evidence of travellers going to mountain country in quest of beauty before the eighteenth century, and the majority of those who were forced to visit such country before that time, in their journeys to foreign cities, describe it as horrible, ugly and depressing …

This new feeling for the romantic, for the unconstrained and for the savage in Nature, although it soon dominated art, was in its essentials quite foreign to art and to the artist. It had nothing in common with the motives that prompt and impel the artist to his creations. Its real essence was moral and not artistic; its fundamental feature was its worship of the abstract

principles of liberty, anarchy and the absence of culture, which rude Nature exemplifies on all sides; and it was a moral or scientific spirit that animated it, whether in Rousseau or in his followers.

Friedrich Schiller, who entirely supports Rousseau's particular kind of love for Nature, frankly admits this in his able and profound analysis of the sentiment in question. Whatever self-contempt and contempt of adult manhood may have lain behind Rousseau's valuations, Schiller brings all of it openly into the light of day and, in his efforts to support the Frenchman's school of thought, literally exposes it to ridicule. (*Nietzsche and Art,* pp. 156–63)

The Downs always had a peculiar effect upon his spirit. They were unlike anything else in English scenery in this: that they seemed to promote in the beholder a clear and realistic attitude to life and the world. Their naked contours, free from all the hidden mystery and romantic secrets suggested by woodland districts, and scorning, as it were, the mark even of ruggedness, impelled the wanderer to clarity and uncompromising logic. They were classical in this sense: that, as their meaning did not lurk partly in themselves and partly in the mind of the spectator, it did not depend upon the latter's mood or standpoint for its explanation. It was written on the features which the hills themselves presented to view, and imposed itself without any possibility of a misunderstanding. It is this arbitrary tone of the Downs landscape, however, that most offends the sophisticated stranger who visits these hills for the first time, and who frequently never wishes to return to them, and it is this arbitrary tone that consists in meaning one thing and no other, which, while it is the characteristic of ancient music, offends the ear that has tasted too long of Wagner and of all those moderns who have built upon him.

For, to the sophisticated mind, a definite meaning in beauty of any kind is boresome. The Downs are, in the first place, the most excellent pasturage for sheep. They are thus sharply differentiated in their original utility from the vast moors covered with heather and gorse, where uselessness—the uselessness so much admired by Oscar Wilde—constitutes the essential charm; where the fundamentally useless modern idler can picture fairies, spirits, spooks and heaven knows what else concealed beneath the untrodden and unhandselled shrubs, and where man and his wants seem to be entirely forgotten in an eternity of sentimental possibilities. The Downs are useful. But to the modern mind the rugged moors are more beautiful,

more ‘poetic’. The South Downs are also unashamed. They exhibit their form; they thrust out their muscles and their sinews beneath the thinnest covering of turf; often they reveal their very bones.

Now, this again offends the modern mind, because it suggests a clear meaning. Nothing is left to the overheated imagination, no opportunity for its morbid exercise. ‘The South Downs are monotonous!’, these people say —monotony being nothing else than weariness of self. But, above all, these hills are solitary and desolate. They are full of plain meanings because man himself feels bound to give his own being a meaning amid such loneliness. His artificial adaptations, his relative meanings have vanished for the nonce. He finds, willy-nilly, that his eyes turn inwards. He himself must become as plain to his own mind as these hills are plain to him. The petty distractions of the multitude have gone; vanity is robbed of its field: what does he himself mean?

Now, it is at this stage in their influence upon the sophisticated modern man that the Downs become particularly obnoxious, for he himself looks best before the optics of his own judgement as an eternity of sentimental possibilities. The Downs force him to probe behind this blurred picture. Their extreme loneliness invites a realistic summing-up of meanings all around. Hence their unpopularity even among those who live directly under their benign brows; hence their loneliness! And long may it continue so! (*French Beans,* pp. 117–18)

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NOTES

[1] *Our Prophets: Being Appreciations of Norman Angell, Bernard Shaw, H. G. Wells, Bertrand Russell, Anthony M. Ludovici* (Croydon, 1932), p. 86.

[2] See David S. Thatcher's *Nietzsche in England, 1890–1914* (Toronto, 1970) and Patrick Bridgwater's *Nietzsche in Anglosaxony* (Leicester, 1972).

[3] Hindustani for 'arrangement'.—Ed.

[4] Those who would understand its true nature, especially when it comes prominently before the public in gifts to hospitals, good works, etc., should observe how constantly 'charitable' people behave with the utmost meanness and callousness to relatives and friends, gifts to whom have no chance of becoming generally known.

[5] The war of all against all.—Ed.

[6] At all costs.—Ed.

[7] It isn't the devil who wants.—Ed.

[8] It isn't the religious who wants.—Ed.

[9] For the context of Ludovici's ruralism, two books that treat the English Mistery and the English Array, though without mentioning Ludovici, are the Earl of Portsmouth's autobiography, *A Knot of Roots* (London, 1965), and Anna Bramwell's *Ecology in the 20th Century: A History* (New Haven, 1989).

[10] Hence the strong man is not, as a rule, susceptible to sudden conversions, sudden changes of opinion or of his scheme of life. And that is why he is often called 'wicked' by the weak man. For the weaker man knows from experience that he personally has been altered or modified by advice, by good counsel, by a word or text, and he thinks that if the strong man were not 'wicked' or 'perverse' he also could be altered in this way. The strong man, on the other hand, never calls the weak man 'wicked' because, knowing perfectly well that his own deeds are inevitable, he imagines that the weak man's deeds are also inevitable. Consequently he scoffs at, laughs at or pities the weak man but does not condemn him from any moral standpoint.

[11] Save yourself if you can.—Ed.

[12] The career open to talents.—Ed.

[13] There are three things that cannot be trusted: a king, a horse and a woman. The king tyrannizes, a horse escapes, a woman is perfidious.

[14] One succeeds by the woman.—Ed.

[15] In general, they feel indifferent to beauty and intelligence—Ed.

[16] Women in general don’t like any of the arts, and neither do they know about any.—Ed.

[17] Thus Havelock Ellis says: ‘It is difficult to recall examples of women who have patiently and slowly fought their way at once to perfection and to fame in the face of complete indifference, like, for instance, Balzac … It is still more difficult to recall a woman who for any abstract and intellectual end has fought her way to success through obloquy and contempt, or without reaching success, like a Roger Bacon or a Galileo, a Wagner or an Ibsen’.

[18] The baby, in other words.—Ed.

[19] Truth to tell, the proud man is disliked nowadays. There is no place for him. The whole of the modern world is run and organized on such lines that only the vain man and woman are regarded as desirable. The bulk of modern men are of the modest-vain type who purr contentedly when their fellows smile upon them; hence the enormous increase in futile and meaningless orders and badges of honour in recent years, and the stampede there is to obtain them.

[20] Under Roman law, a wife legally controlled by—literally, in the hand of—her husband.—Ed.

[21] Madame de Maintenon was meant.

[22] Dr Emma Gurney Salter, Litt.D., in *Tudor England through Venetian Glasses* (London, 1930), quotes various testimonies from the reports of Venetian ambassadors to this effect. See especially pp. 117, 121, 123. There is also similar testimony from a German traveller named Keichel. See also Thomas Hardy in *The Return of the Native*, chapter 1, book 3. According to Froude, Erasmus also bears witness to the same effect.

[23] Who, in random-bred populations, are always bound to be plentiful.

[24] God, he’s ugly!—Ed.

[25] The devil becomes a hermit.—Ed.

[26] Your body is yours.—Ed.

[27] Horatio Bottomley, a crooked British tycoon and politician, jailed in 1921.—Ed.

[28] But it’s a game for schoolboys!—Ed.

[29] Your body isn’t yours.—Ed.

[30] Good breeding.—Ed.

[31] Youthful bloom.—Ed.

[32] Unpaid labour carried out by vassals.—Ed.

[33] For details of The New Age circle, which helped to mould Ludovici's views, see Wallace Martin's *The New Age Under Orage* (Manchester, England, 1967).

[34] At top speed.—Ed.

[35] The main figure in a picture is the light.—Ed.

[36] Our art is in a very great period of bewilderment … The artists having lost all their savagery, no longer having instinct—one might say imagination—are confused in every way to find the productive elements which they lack the strength to create.—Ed.

[37] A work of art is a part of Creation seen through a temperament.—Ed.

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